PENTECOSTAL MINISTERS LIBRARY

# SALVATION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Every salvation experience recorded in Acts coincides with Peter's initial account of salvation in Acts 2:38

FRED KINZIE

To Don, My Son
May the Lord bless
you with a
Spiritual Awakening of
His Truth.

Donald H. Aude

Don, this book
was written by
Luke* an Apostle
of Paul. I would
like you to read
it totaly and
thoroughly. The
*GOSPEL of Luke
Love, Dad
Page 16, Center of page.

PENTECOSTAL MINISTERS LIBRARY

# SALVATION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

P 28

PENTECOSTAL MINISTERS LIBRARY

# SALVATION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Fred Kinzie

# Salvation in the Book of Acts

by Fred Kinzie

©1988 Word Aflame Press
Hazelwood, MO 63042-2299

Reprint History: 2001
Cover Design: Paul Povolni

All Scripture quotations in this book are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise identified. Some quotations from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. Some quotations from The New King James Version. Copyright ©1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers. Some quotations from The New Testament in Modern English, J.B. Phillips. Copyright© J. B. Phillips, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1972, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, stored in an electronic system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Word Aflame Press. Brief quotations may be used in literary reviews.

Printed in United States of America.

WAP WORD AFLAME® PRESS
8855 DUNN ROAD
HAZELWOOD, MO 63042-2299

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Kinzie, Frederick E., 1914-
Salvation in the Book of Acts / by Fred Kinzie.
p. cm.
ISBN 0-932581-40-4 :
1. Bible. N.T. Acts—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Bible. N.T. Epistles—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 3. Salvation—Biblical teaching. I. Title.
BS2625.2.K53 1988 88-20758
226'.606—dc19 CIP

# Contents

Foreword . . . . . 7
Preface . . . . . 9

Part One
1. Is Acts Important? . . . . . 13
2. Acts Is Important! . . . . . 15
3. The Beginning of Salvation . . . . . 23 To 28
4. The Birthday of the Church . . . . . 29
5. God's New Relationship to Humanity . . . . . 35
6. God's Plan of Salvation Revealed . . . . . 43
7. Repentance . . . . . 55
8. Water Baptism in Jesus' Name . . . . . 63
9. The Gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . . 77
10. The Salvation Experiences of Paul and Cornelius . . . . . 91
11. Salvation Experiences, Acts 1-12 . . . . . 101
12. Salvation Experiences, Acts 13-17 . . . . . 121
13. Salvation Experiences, Acts 18-28 . . . . . 135

Part Two
14. The Epistles and Acts . . . . . 151
15. Salvation in Romans . . . . . 163
16. Salvation in Titus. . . . . 171
17. Conclusion . . . . . 177
Addendum 1. . . . . 183
Addendum 2. . . . . 185

# 4

# The Birthday of the Church

The most striking, momentous events of all time occurred at Jerusalem in a short period of about thirty-three years. No other era of human history equals it. It is called by many the fulcrum of eternity.

Without question that period was divinely designed with events of infinite magnitude. It began with the Incarnation, when God stooped to clothe Himself with flesh as the Son. It culminated with the "infusion," when people were redeemed and filled by the Spirit of God. This infusion of believing people by the Holy Ghost was the birthday of the church.

### Where Did It Take Place?

The birth of the church took place in Judea, where there was a great concentration of Jewish people. Jerusalem, the capital city of Judaism, was in Judea, and it provided a patriotic attraction for Jews from all nations

where they had been dispersed. It was a common practice for them to travel to Jerusalem three times a year to attend the feasts.

One hundred twenty disciples returned from the Mount of Olives, where they saw Jesus ascend into heaven, to an upper room. The Bible does not describe its exact location. There they waited for the promise Jesus had made to them on several occasions, the last time being just prior to His ascension (Acts 1:5). It is not certain, however, whether they were in the upper room or at the Temple when the outpouring of the Spirit actually took place. Some evidence exists for both locations.

Evidently it was a common practice for the disciples to go to the Temple at the hour of prayer. In Acts 3:1 two of them headed there for evening prayer. The third hour of the day was also a Temple prayer time. The statement of Acts 2:46—"They continu[ed] daily with one accord in the temple"—suggests that it was not unusual for the disciples to be at the Temple often. Similarly, Luke 24:53 states, "And [they] were continually in the temple," indicating that they spent much time in that area. Some commentators believe that the Holy Ghost outpouring occurred at an area of the Temple called Solomon's porch.

On the other hand, Acts 1:13-14 states that the believers prayed in the upper room. The word *abode* indicates that the room was a favorite spot of theirs.

Wherever the Spirit fell, there had to be an adjacent area large enough to accommodate a crowd of over three thousand. The Temple area could easily accommodate such a crowd, but it is questionable whether there would have been enough space at the site traditionally designated as the upper room area.

**Who Were There?**

Acts 1:13-15 records that the following people were waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit, and Acts 2:4 says they were all filled.

1. Peter, James and John.
2. The other eight apostles.
3. Matthias and Joseph, called Barsabas (Acts 1:23).
4. Mary, the mother of Jesus.
5. The women. Luke 23:49, 55 mentions women who followed Jesus from Galilee. From Luke 23:55-24:10 it appears that they were the ones who were at the tomb first on resurrection morning. Luke mentions three in particular: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. John 19:25 mentions that Mary the wife of Cleophas, a sister of Jesus' mother, was at the cross with the other women. It is probable that all these Galilean women, as well as Mary and Martha of Bethany, were present.
6. The brethren of Jesus. These were His half brothers, sons of Mary and Joseph. Their names were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matthew 13:55).
7. The group totaled 120. This number no doubt included the 70 Jesus sent out one time, Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, and others who walked with Jesus. One wonders what happened to the rest of the 500 mentioned in I Corinthians 15:6 who saw the resurrected Christ. Could it be that they were not willing to lay aside earthly cares long enough to spend time in waiting for the promise, and so missed the big event? They believed all right, but not enough to act on the words spoken by Jesus, a common fault even today! Perhaps they were among those who received the Holy

Ghost after the initial outpouring.

**Why on This Particular Day?**

Pentecost was a feast day on which the Jews gave thanks for the spring harvest. They also commemorated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Pentecost, which means "fiftieth day" in Greek, took place fifty days after the Passover lamb was slain, and the giving of the law had occurred about the same time after the first Passover. In the plan of God, the Passover lamb foreshadowed the Cross; the crossing of the Red Sea foreshadowed water baptism; and the giving of the law foreshadowed the giving of the Holy Ghost.

In II Corinthians 3:3-11 the Apostle Paul contrasted the giving of the law and the giving of the Spirit: "You are a letter from Christ . . . written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. . . . Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts" (NIV).

In other words, the outpouring of the Spirit was what God had in mind all the time. The real Pentecost occurred at the giving of the Holy Ghost!

### What Were They Doing?

After Jesus ascended, the disciples

1. Worshiped (Luke 24:52)
2. Experienced great joy (Luke 24:52)
3. Praised and blessed God (Luke 24:53)
4. Prayed and made supplication with one accord (Acts 1:14)
5. Attended to unfinished business (Acts 1:26)

They were a determined, dedicated, believing group who obeyed the word of their Master. He had said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49), and that is what they did. They did not take the word of their Lord lightly, as so many do today, but were anxious to please Him.

### What Was God's Plan?

Pentecost was completely in the purpose and intention of God. Pentecost was not an afterthought, concocted after the failure of humanity under the law, but it was His glorious design from the beginning. It was a new beginning for mankind, and it ushered in a new relationship with God. It was the culmination of events foretold by the prophets, as the Apostle Peter declared in his message (Acts 2:16). It provided a new spiritual dimension, fulfilling the promise Jesus gave as He shared an intimate time with His disciples in the last few hours before His arrest and subsequent death: "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17).

Union with God is the essence of God's design for His greatest object of creation—humanity. Satan temporarily foiled God's plan in the Garden of Eden, but at Pentecost God's people began to enjoy a greater communion with

God, being enlightened and infused by His Spirit. He placed His law of holiness not on tables of stone but on the fleshly tables of their hearts. This is the real Pentecost!

God's people today are Pentecostal people. As John the Baptist declared, the mission of Jesus was twofold: (1) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," (2) "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:29, 33). The mission of Jesus Christ involves both cleansing from sin and baptizing with His Spirit. The Cross enables us to come to God and God to come to us. Therefore the experience of salvation today includes both cleansing from sin (justification) and being filled by God's Spirit (regeneration and sanctification). (See Romans 5:1-5.) Salvation is a regenerative process that infuses God's life into the heart of a cleansed person.

The 120 were ready when the Spirit of God came. Jesus had been preparing them for three and one half years. Then He came in a brand-new relationship to them—not in the flesh any longer, but in the Spirit.

# 5

# God's New Relationship to Humanity

Let us imagine what Jerusalem was like on the Day of Pentecost after Christ's ascension. (See Acts 2.)

Jerusalem had been through some shocking experiences recently, culminating with an unprecendented darkening of the sun at noon for three hours followed in three days with the disturbing news that one of those crucified was believed to be alive again!

"Now what? Will these strange affairs never cease?" The people questioned, speculating about the unusual events occurring in their city.

The city was crowded with tourists who had come from outlying areas and other nations to attend the Feast of Pentecost. The day had finally arrived. Although it was but nine o'clock in the morning, the streets were already filled with the milling throngs. Old friends renewed acquaintances, excitedly filling in details of events that had happened since they last met. It seemed that almost

everyone had heard about the strange events that had surrounded the carpenter's son. Most of the speculation concerned the report of His being seen alive by several people.

Many mocked the news of the resurrection, claiming that His disciples had secreted Him away in the darkness of night. But others were convinced that the news was authentic. Arguments, some quite loud and boisterous, were going on everywhere. Many a person was heard to say, "They'll have to show me before I ever believe it. It's preposterous to think that anyone from Nazareth could have a special relationship with God."

"Now wait a moment," someone blurted out. "Could be, because that Jesus did some strange things. Why, just before they took Him to that cross over on Golgotha, He raised Lazarus from the dead. I know it's true because I saw Lazarus afterward, and he was as good as new. Pretty puny just before he died, but he sure did look good the day I saw him."

"Aw, come on now," his partner butted in. "You don't believe that trash, do you? His sisters just had him hidden away and nursed him back to health. Then they came up with that fantastic story to make Jesus look good in everyone's eyes. Anyhow, if anything like that was to happen it would have to be in the Temple. That's where God works when He does work. We've not heard much lately, however, that God's been doing anything anywhere. Guess He's kinda forgotten His chosen people, huh?"

On and on went the quibbling as folks discussed and analyzed the strange happenings in Jerusalem. Excitement was in the air as though something was about to happen.

Suddenly, out of nowhere came the noise of a furious, roaring wind. It sounded like a tornado, but the milling throng, scrutinizing the sky, saw no evidence of a storm. In fact, the sky was clear.

"What was that?" they questioned, looking inquiringly at one another, a puzzled expression of fear haunting their faces. Stopping dead in their tracks, they looked first one way and then another, not knowing what to do. Some started to run but did not know which way to go. One man jumped behind a large rock, trying to shield himself from the inevitable.

As suddenly as the noise came it stopped! Quietness settled over the city, and the people looked at one another as though expecting another blast of that roaring sound.

Soon the stillness was punctuated by another sound, faint at first but increasing rapidly in volume. It was the sound of many voices mingled together in an excited, ecstatic manner. Curiosity moved the people eagerly toward the sound of the noisy voices.

Arriving, they found a group of men and women speaking exuberantly in different languages. Everyone was speaking at the same time, making the scene somewhat confusing. Their smiling faces, however, beamed as though a light had been lit within them. They seemed in another world, oblivious to the events swirling around them. An exultant joyfulness emanated from them as they continued speaking. Many had their hands raised as though reaching for something just beyond their grasp. Others staggered as though intoxicated. The sight was strange indeed.

Eventually several thousand people crowded around. Groups of people with puzzled expressions on their faces

formed, and they questioned one another as to what this could mean. Some of the more dubious onlookers were overheard to say, "These folks are drunk. They sound like a gang of blabbering fools."

As the multitudes milled around they became aware that these strange-acting people were speaking in the listeners' own native languages. They were extolling God's greatness in these various tongues. "These are all Galileans. How did they learn these languages?" the onlookers questioned curiously, amazed by what they observed.

Looking around they noticed a group of men standing apart from the crowd. They had gathered on an elevation that raised them above the rest of the people. One of them stepped forward and raised his hand, gesturing for silence. Then he began speaking in the language of the Jews.

Some soon recognized him as a follower of Jesus before He was crucified. By the forceful, positive way he now spoke, however, it was difficult to believe that this was the same fearful, cringing man who seven weeks previously had denied Christ three times, even cursing to emphasize the fact.

But it was! Simon Peter was now a changed man. Although the crowd did not realize it, Jesus Christ had moved into Peter's heart through the Spirit, making him a different person. No doubt Jesus had this in mind when He spoke to him on a previous occasion, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

Why did Peter do the speaking? Although impetuous,

he possessed a unique characteristic God could use. Usually the first to speak up, he had a keen sense of spiritual things. He was "quick on the trigger." Impulsively, he had drawn his sword and cut off the high priest's servant's ear. In a cowardly moment he had been quick to deny emphatically that he was a follower of Jesus. But at the same time, with his sense of perception, he was first among the twelve to articulate who Jesus really was! Because of this, Jesus gave him the keys of the kingdom, aware that he had a divine revelation. (See Matthew 16:15-19.) Now, baptized with the Holy Ghost, he was ready to use those keys for the first time.

Addressing the crowd, Peter quickly assured them that these men were not drunken as they supposed. He associated this momentous event with the prophecy of Joel, quoting the prophet verbatim. (See Joel 2:28-32.)

His courage in speaking contrasted markedly to his previous cowardice. He was both fearless and forceful in his presentation of Jesus Christ. He explained eight things about Christ that were of the utmost importance.

1. *His Person.* Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in their midst, of which things they were fully aware.

2. *His perfection.* This was demonstrated by all the things He had done among them without a legitimate charge placed against Him.

3. *His death on the cross.* Peter placed blame for Christ's death on the hearers, stating that they had taken Him with wicked hands and crucified and slain Him, even though His death had been predetermined in the foreknowledge of God.

4. *His resurrection.* God had raised Him, the pains of death being loosed, because it was not possible that He should be held by death.

5. *His exaltation.* He is exalted to the position of omnipotence, with all power in heaven and earth given to Him. (This is the meaning of the "right hand of God." In explaining Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-35), F. F. Bruce wrote, "Incidentally, the 'right hand of God' was as figurative an expression to first-century Christians as to those of the twentieth century and denoted universal supremacy in honour and authority."[1])

6. *His prerogative of dispensing the Spirit.* John the Baptist had already said He would baptize with the Spirit.

7. *His pouring out of the Spirit.* The crowd had just seen and heard this event.

8. *His identity.* God had exalted the One they had crucified as both Lord and Christ.

Peter's anointed words pierced the minds and pricked the hearts of the multitude as he charged them with crucifying Jesus. His message forced them to face the consequences of their cry of "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" that they had screamed out at Pilate's judgment hall. Although some of the crowd may not have been part of the crucifixion mob, nevertheless they felt the sting of that ignoble atrocity. Many of these people may have seen the blood dripping from His hands and flowing from His side as He hung on the cross. Some of them may even have heard Him utter, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

What was the result of this Holy Spirit-anointed message spoken by Peter with profound sincerity? Deep conviction gripped his hearers. His Spirit-inspired words

went straight to their hearts like an arrow to its prey! What they had just seen, heard, and felt reached their conscience. In humility they cried out unashamedly, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

For the first time, Peter unlocked the door of New Testament salvation with the keys Jesus had given him, swinging it open to the inquiring crowd. His answer is the means God has ordained for a person to become part of His church today, the bride of Christ!

Jesus was no longer with His disciples in the flesh as previously, but now He inhabited their hearts in a brand-new relationship. God knew this experience would be the only permanent solution to humanity's problem. The giving of the law, an outward code, had not sufficed. Now both the law and lawgiver moved to a new residence —the hearts of redeemed people.

There is no doubt about it; the Day of Pentecost was one of the greatest days in the history of the church. Of course, the day of Christ's birth brought God's plan into human society. The day of His death implemented all of God's redeeming provisions. The resurrection enacted Christ's saving power and proved His immortality and deity. Forty days later He ascended, without which He would not have returned later in the Spirit. All of these days were fraught with terrific meaning and importance. But the actual birthday of the New Testament church, in which God's plan of salvation for the individual reached its climax, was the Day of Pentecost. All the other days were necessary stepping stones to this event.

God had a crowd there for that grand occasion. The means whereby people could and would receive His salvation was set forth in clear, concise language. God could

not afford an error at this juncture. The people who heard this message would take it to their respective countries where it would form the nucleus of churches there. A clear, concise annunciation of God's great plan was important at this time. Everything else in church history would stem from the experience and message of that day.

Peter's message went straight to the heart as it laid sin at the door of every person and then declared how sin could be pardoned through the name of Jesus Christ. The result would be a brand-new relationship with God through the gift of the Holy Ghost.

No one can change this message. In fact, God's Word pronounces a curse upon every one who would attempt to do so (Galatians 1:8-9). We must accept the experience that God bestowed on the Day of Pentecost and the message of salvation that His spokesman, Peter, preached that day with the support of all the apostles. We dare not try to change that message to suit our fancy!

**Note**

[1]F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 64.

# 6

# God's Plan of Salvation Revealed

If you were asked the question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" as the apostles were in Acts 2:37, what would you answer? Would you say what the Apostle Peter did? Are his instructions relevant and essential to salvation?

His answer has been the object of much controversy, and its importance almost lost in our day. Acts 2:38 records the answer he gave with the support of the other apostles:

*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

It is reported that on a recent radio broadcast a prominent and highly respected radio minister questioned

Peter's answer and wondered why God put it in the Bible this way. It seems that the general opinion of the religious world today is to avoid this answer at any cost.

This position raises several questions. First, why would professed Christians want to avoid the message preached at the very beginning of the church age? Did the Apostle Peter become confused and misinterpret Christ's intentions? Is there a continuity between the declaration in Acts 2:38 and the rest of Acts? Why did the Apostle Peter answer the inquiry of the concerned on that day? Had he been given a special authority to speak for the apostolic band?

Peter did have a mandate from the Lord Jesus Christ: the keys to the kingdom were in his hands, given to him by Jesus Christ Himself. (See Matthew 16:13-20.) He was handling something so valuable that angels dare not touch it. Not even the Lord Jesus Himself would divulge His plan of salvation to Saul of Tarsus but directed him to a gospel preacher named Ananias. With Christ's death the message had gone into His estate, so to speak (Hebrews 9:16-17), and the Apostle Peter was the executor. Acts 2:38 records his initial use of the keys; there he spelled out the qualifying factors necessary to participate in Christ's inheritance. (See Ephesians 1:11-14; Colossians 1:12; I Peter 1:4.) Thus Acts 2:38 is the New Testament church's first declaration of God's plan that makes a person eligible for that inheritance.

The apostle's answer was God's answer. It was inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was and is God's Word. This fact cannot be overemphasized. Acts 2:38 qualifies as the answer to humanity's quest for salvation and release from sin, regardless of how theologians may ignore it. Every element

of salvation is in this verse. The answer is for every person whose hungering heart reaches for God. It is the pattern for all salvation experiences in the Book of Acts.

The history of God's working with mankind affirms that He works in patterns. When He gives a pattern, humanity must not ignore it. Let us consider three other patterns God gave to humanity.

### A Pattern for Noah

God gave Noah a pattern for the ark; He did not allow Noah to build to suit his own fancy. Genesis 6:14-16 records God's instructions concerning the ark:

*Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.*

Let us notice the specific instructions.

1. Material: gopher wood. (Would any other wood have sufficed?)
2. Rooms: the Lord laid out interior.
3. Exterior and interior covering material: pitch.
4. Length: three hundred cubits.
5. Breadth: fifty cubits.
6. Height: thirty cubits. Only God knew what would be in the ark and how much space would be needed.

7. Window: only one. It had to be *above* so that the occupants could only look up.

8. Door: set in the side.

9. Stories: three.

10. Occupants: Noah and his wife, his sons and their wives, and two of all living animals, male and female. Of clean animals there were to be seven.

Genesis 7:5 records that Noah obeyed God's instructions exactly: "And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him." Would God have been pleased if Noah had built the ark different from the instructions? What would have been God's attitude if Noah had taken into the ark something other than what God told him? Certainly, He would have manifested His displeasure in a significant way!

**The Tabernacle in the Wilderness**

The instructions for the Tabernacle are recorded in Exodus 25-31 and the actual building of it in Exodus 35-39. Two verses set the tone of instructions:

*And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it* (Exodus 25:8-9).

God also admonished Moses in Exodus 25:40, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." This statement or one similar to it is reiterated in Exodus 26:30, 27:8, Numbers 8:4, and Hebrews 8:5.

Why was this pattern necessary? Was there something divine about this specific plan? Hebrews 9:21-24 explains: "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a figure of the true heavenly pattern, which could not be prefigured with anything that was not precisely accurate. It had to be made exactly as God dictated.

When the Tabernacle was completed Exodus 39:43 records, "And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them."

### Israel's Encampment and Travel

Another pattern God gave was the arrangement of Israel's camp while in the wilderness and specific instructions for their travel, including the transportation of every piece of the Tabernacle. Certain people were designated to prepare and carry each item of the Tabernacle.

Numbers 1:47-4:49 gives instructions for Israel's encampment and their moving from place to place. Not just anyone could move the Tabernacle. The priests prepared it for moving, and the Levitical family of Kohath was commissioned to carry it. Any deviation from this pattern was

very serious in God's sight.

An example of the seriousness of deviation is the story of David bringing the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem after it had been recaptured from the Philistines. (See I Chronicles 13.) David followed the pattern of the Philistines and moved the ark on a cart. When the cart rocked and threatened to upset, Uzza, a servant of David, reached out to steady the ark. This act cost him his life. Somewhat dismayed by this turn of events and recognizing God's displeasure, David abandoned his project and determined to study the Scriptures to discover why this had happened.

I Chronicles 15:2 relates his discovery: "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever." Explaining this to the people in I Chronicles 15:13, David said, "For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order."

David had the right motive in bringing the ark back, but he did it the wrong way. Did God excuse him for his error? Absolutely not! Because he was the "sweet singer of Israel" did God overlook his mistake? Absolutely not! David was ignorant of the "due order," but did his ignorance exempt him? Absolutely not! David was a man after God's own heart, but did that position justify his misjudgment? Absolutely not!

### Five Factors in New Testament Salvation

It is apparent that God has a pattern in the way He does things. His plan of salvation follows a definite pattern throughout the Book of Acts, and this plan harmo-

nizes with the teaching of Christ while He was here on earth and also with the explanations given by the apostles, including Paul, in all of their epistles.

A sincere study of God's Word reveals five factors that are part of salvation in this age. Of course, salvation comes to us through Jesus Christ.

The Bible uses many terms in connection with salvation, such as justification, redemption, sanctification, reconciliation, and restoration, but all of these concepts fit into the pattern and framework of the five factors we will discuss.

The five factors are grace, faith, repentance, water baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Let us consider each of them separately.

**Grace**

Grace is the unmerited favor of God toward mankind, provided through Jesus Christ.

The grace of God is the source of salvation. God initiated salvation. He planned it, He sent it, He gave it, and He calls people to receive it.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men* (Titus 2:11).

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Salvation starts with God, never with man. It comes from His bountiful love. Every person needs to understand this truth. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy

and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

Thus it is plain that the church was not an afterthought of God, planned after the failure of mankind under the law. His number-one priority before the foundation of the world was to have a bride, a holy people. The conclusion that God came to regarding Adam—"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18)—was apparently a reflection of His own desire for human fellowship. As He provided a bride for Adam, He would do the same for Himself. He would come Himself, incarnate as a man, and pay the price to redeem that bride for Himself. Hosea 1:1-3:3 presents a beautiful illustration of God's plan. Hosea bought back his wife, who had gone astray and into deep sin, thereby portraying God's redemption plan and His great grace.

The parables of Matthew 13:44-46 illustrate God's gracious provision of salvation: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

The church, God's bride, is the treasure hid in a field (the world) that God gave His all to purchase. Ephesians 1:14 calls it "the purchased possession." God bought the whole world to get the treasure. The church is the treasure God sought and bought.

In II Timothy 1:9-10 Paul stated, "[God] hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Bethlehem, Calvary, the tomb, the resurrection, and Pentecost were God's means of implementing the plan He had originated in eternity past. The man Christ Jesus embodied God's grace in its most complete, perfect and manifest form. (See I Timothy 2:5.)

There must be a human response to God's grace, however; otherwise all people would automatically be saved. In that case, there would be no need for the proclamation of the gospel. But the Bible clearly declares that many will be lost and that everyone needs to hear the message of salvation.

**Faith**

The necessary human response to God's grace is faith unto obedience. To illustrate this point, let us picture a drowning man who suddenly becomes aware that he is sinking. He hears a splash, and there at his fingertips lies a life preserver awaiting his grasp. If he wants to be rescued, he must grasp it and be towed to safety. If he refuses to grasp it, however, he will drown. The life preserver swung out to the unsaved is like the grace of God. Grasping hold of it represents a person's faith. If he does not respond, nothing else can be done to save him.

Faith may be defined as "having complete confidence in, trusting, fully relying on," and it is the underlying,

all-encompassing response that brings salvation to a person's soul. It is absolutely necessary to salvation:

*But without faith it is impossible to please him* (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is not faith until it moves a person to action. That is where obedience enters the scene. Noah is a good example: "By faith Noah, . . . moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he . . . became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). When someone truly believes, he acts. In fact, a careful study of Hebrews 11 reveals that every verb referring to faith is an active verb, denoting people of action.

James 2:17-18 explains that passive faith is sterile; it is no faith at all. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

The person who would find God must "believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Obedience is the moving ingredient in an active faith.

Recognizing these two factors of grace and faith, let us examine Peter's reply to the question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He did not mention grace, but his words implied it. His whole message in Acts 2 centered around the death, burial, resurrection, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. These events occurred by the grace of God and bring the grace of God to humanity.

Peter did not explicitly mention faith either, but it is

implied in the query "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" If the inquirers had not believed Peter's message about Jesus Christ they would not have asked the question. Subsequent verses show that they received (believed) Peter's words and obeyed them (Acts 2:41-44).

Peter's reply states three additional factors in salvation: repentance, baptism, and when these are obeyed, God's seal of approval, the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See Ephesians 1:13-14.)

Of course, we must never exalt the experience of salvation above Jesus Christ, the central theme of God's foreordained plan. The man Christ Jesus—His shed blood, burial, and resurrection—is so closely entwined with the experience of salvation that they are inseparable in the whole purpose of God. The result is salvation—endless eternity with Jesus Christ, His church and the angels.

Grace and faith are absolutely necessary to salvation, but they cannot be divorced from repentance, water baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the latter three factors are the application of grace and the expression of faith. The next three chapters will discuss these three elements of Acts 2:38 that are vital parts of God's salvation plan today.

# 7

# Repentance

*Then Peter said unto them, Repent . . .* (Acts 2:38).

People by nature are hostile toward God. When God placed the flaming sword at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, He showed His disapproval of the disobedience of Adam and Eve and subsequently of all mankind. Sin placed God and men at variance. A hostility gripped mankind. Typical was Cain, who developed a hostile attitude when God rejected his inadequate offering. This rebellion is in every person, and it must be eliminated before fellowship with God can be restored.

Through His grace, humanity can be reconciled to God by the Cross. As Chester Wright put it, "God's hatred for sin and His love for the sinner collided at the cross." II Corinthians 5:19 explains plainly: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed

unto us the word of reconciliation."

The drama of redemption was displayed when Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:22). The crowd chanted, "Crucify him, crucify him!" These words demonstrated once and for all the innate hostility of humanity toward God. Jesus was taken to Golgotha, and on the cross He prayed "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). With that petition, God's whole plan of reconciliation was set in motion. God's wrath against sin was satisfied by the sacrifice of Calvary. The blood of the Lamb of God provided the perfect atonement, and God will not charge people with their trespasses if they will turn to Him.

The hostility of humanity toward God still has to change, however, and that is where faith and repentance enter the picture. To be saved, people must surrender their hostility. Only when someone understands that Jesus, the Lamb of God, took the sinner's place in death can he exercise faith.

Genuine faith moves a person to true repentance. Repentance means a change of mind regarding sin, self, and the Savior.

Regarding sin, the sinner must recognize its ugliness and its infringement upon God's holiness. With humility he must ask for forgiveness and make a decision to forsake sin.

Regarding self, the sinner must evaluate himself as unworthy before God, a lost sinner headed for the judgment, without hope, and desperately needing to be saved.

Regarding the Savior, the sinner must accept His death, burial, and resurrection as true and put complete

reliance in God's provision for the forgiveness and remission of sins—the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

God's Spirit draws a person to Him. A conviction grips him with a realization of his sinfulness and impending judgment. Repentance means doing something about that sinful condition to bring God's response from heaven—forgiveness.

Repentance is a 180 degree turnabout in a person's relationship to God. The right to approach God in a penitent attitude is the result of God's grace in providing the means. Faith embraces the provision of Calvary and moves a person to ask forgiveness and to be obedient to God's Word. Repentance is a must in everyone's salvation experience. "Except ye repent," Jesus said, "ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

According to John Stott, "Repentance is a definite turning from every thought, word, deed, and habit which is known to be wrong. It is not sufficient to feel pangs of remorse or to make some kind of apology to God. Fundamentally, repentance is a matter neither of emotion nor speech. It is an inward change of mind and attitude towards God and sin which leads to a change of behavior."[1]

A neighbor of ours, whom we took to church, provides a good illustration of this definition of repentance. He, his wife, and daughter came to the Lord. Both the wife and daughter wept and prayed as they turned to Christ, but he shed no tears nor uttered a word in prayer. Since I was praying with him, this disturbed me to the extent that I questioned his right to be baptized. I mentioned his lack of praying to our pastor, but he baptized

him anyway, and I was to learn that a person can repent—have a change of heart and mind—without tears or a vocal prayer. He became a stalwart Christian and walked with the Lord for forty-five years before going on to meet Him. "

On the other hand I have seen people who for years never genuinely repented. They went to an altar, prayed, and were baptized, but never really had a change of mind or heart. One person came to church for twenty-five years before being really gripped by genuine repentance. Remorse alone is not repentance. "Repentance is only real when a person turns away from sin and to God. "

Since repentance is a heart affair, often it is very difficult to ascertain a person's sincerity. Some churches put a time period between repentance and baptism in order to teach the rituals of the church prior to baptism. But from Acts 2:37-41 it is evident that the apostles did not institute this practice. Moreover, other accounts of baptism in the New Testament contain no waiting period. (See Acts 8:12; 9:18; 10:44-48; 16:14-15; 16:30-33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16.) Therefore, if a person affirms that he has repented, after repentance has been clearly explained to him, then he should be baptized, unless there is definite evidence of insincerity or incomprehension on his part.

We do not know how many of the three thousand who responded to Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost kept their commitment. We would like to think that one hundred percent did, but no doubt some of them failed to walk with God. The Parable of the Sower indicates that many people, even enthusiastic followers, ultimately do not persevere in their Christian experience. But does a minister make a mistake when he baptizes people imme-

diately upon their repentance? No. The Early Church followed this pattern, even though some people surely dropped out then as they do now.

Real repentance eliminates sin. It consists of asking forgiveness for past sin and then determining to forsake sin.

True repentance is always preceded by a conviction of wrongdoing against God or man or both. For instance, Acts 2:37 says of the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart" (Acts 2:37). Other versions of the New Testament give additional insight into the meaning of this verse:

"They were conscience-smitten" (TCNT).
"It went straight to their hearts" (Moffatt).
"They were stung to the heart" (Goodspeed).
"They were stabbed to the heart" (Williams).
"They were moved to the depths of their hearts" (Berkeley).
"Their consciences were stung" (Knox).
"They were cut to the heart" (RSV).
"They were pierced to the heart" (NASB).
"They felt crushed" (Beck).

When such a depth of feeling grips a person, he starts searching for relief. He will find it only in repentance!

True repentance includes not only sorrow and remorse but also forsaking of sin and obedience to God. In the words of M. R. Vincent, "Mere sorrow, which weeps and sits still, is not repentance. Repentance is sorrow converted into action; into a movement toward a new and better life."[2] William Nevins similarly contrasted partial versus complete

repentance: "There are two kinds of repentance: one is that of Judas, the other that of Peter; the one is ice broken, the other ice melted."[3] Martin Luther likewise wrote, "To do so no more is the truest repentance."[4]

One of the greatest expressions of repentance in the Bible is that of David in Psalm 51:7-12: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine inquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

David feared that God would abandon him in his sinful condition, even to the extent of removing His presence from him. His only hope was the mercy and grace of God in forgiveness and a complete cleansing of his sin. Genuine repentance asks not only for forgiveness, but also for a clean heart and a right spirit.

An important scriptural teaching about repentance is found in Isaiah 1:11-13: "The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me? says the LORD. I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to meet with me who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me" (NIV).

These three verses show God's abhorrence for sins that are not genuinely repented of. Although the blood of Jesus Christ is the ultimate offering for our sins, God

is not pleased with someone who pleads that blood without genuine repentance.

In Isaiah 1:16-19 God gave His remedy and the proper approach of a sinner to Him: "Wash and make yourselves clean! Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. 'Come now, let us reason together,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land'" (NIV).

God cleanses people as they believe and obey His Word. Only as they genuinely repent and forsake their sins can God do the work He wants to in their lives.

The listeners on the Day of Pentecost were at the threshold of repentance when they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized . . ." (Acts 2:38).

The next chapter will consider baptism as taught by the Word of God and its place in the salvation experience. In our study, let us keep our hearts open to God's Word. It will be our guide here and our judge there!

**Notes**

[1]John Stott, *Basic Christianity,* quoted in Paul S. Rees, *Men of Action* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1946), p. 87.

[2]*The New Dictionary of Thoughts,* (New York: Standard Book Co., 1936) p. 544.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

# 8

# Water Baptism in Jesus' Name

*And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . .* (Acts 2:38).

In conjunction with repentance, Peter commanded *everyone* to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Clearly, water baptism is important in God's plan of salvation.

But many churches and ministers think not! They associate baptism with "works," often referring to it merely as a ceremony or a purely symbolic event. But is it?

Two of the four Gospel writers record that Jesus included baptism in the plan of salvation in their version of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16), and the other two imply it (Luke 24:47; John 20:23). Thus Peter's inclusion of baptism in Acts 2:38 was a directive of Christ, not just an insertion of his own thinking.

Luke's account in Acts 2:41 shows that baptism is an

important act of faith and obedience: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." And in Acts 8:12 he stated, "When they believed . . . they were baptized."

**What Is Important about Baptism?**

To be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" signifies an acceptance of His death, burial, and resurrection in a personal application to one's self. Peter declared that baptism is "for the remission of sins" that were paid for by Jesus Christ when He shed His blood on the cross.

Often we see the phrase "Please remit," which simply means "Please pay your bill." When a person is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, his "sin account" is transferred to the account of Jesus Christ, which He has already paid by His death on Calvary. He took our judgment and punishment. The transfer of our sin to His account takes place at baptism as a person obeys His command. (See II Corinthians 5:21; Acts 22:16.) It is an act of complete faith in what He did for us. Some may question why God chose to enact His grace in this manner, but He did, and since He is sovereign it is our responsibility to obey.

Many theologians today try to discredit baptism as meaningless because some who are baptized do not follow through in their Christian commitment. "They go down a dry sinner and come up a wet one" is the standard derogatory statement so often made. The failure of some, however, should never negate the effectiveness of what Christ established in His plan of redemption. Since Jesus gave the command to baptize, it is a disavowal of His Word and of His death and burial to deny baptism's efficacy. It casts a doubt on His resurrection also, for if He were not buried, there would not have been a resurrec-

tion. Romans 6:3-4 associates the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with water baptism, particularly stating that at baptism a person is buried with Him.

### For the Remission of Sins

The phrase "for the remission of sins" has caused much disputing. In particular people often question the word *for*. Does it mean "in order to obtain" or "because of" in the above phrase from Acts 2:38?

Some time ago our church was criticized by a group who believed that the word *for* here meant "because of" instead of "in order to obtain." They used some unscrupulous means in an attempt to discredit us. Our assistant pastor at the time, J. Mark Jordan, an avid Greek student, researched forty different versions of the Scripture on *for* as used in Acts 2:38. Not one translated it as "because of" or the equivalent. Here is a partial list of various translations of the phrase in Acts 2:38:

"For the remission of sins" (KJV).
"For the forgiveness of your sins" (RSV).
"So that you may have your sins forgiven" (Phillips).
"For the forgiveness of your sins" (NEB).
"That you may have your sins forgiven" (Williams).
"Into the remission of your sins" (Rheims).
"Unto remission of your sins" (ABUV).
"For the forgiveness of your sins" (TCNT).
"In order to have your sins forgiven" (Goodspeed).
"For the forgiveness of your sins" (Authentic New Testament).
"For the forgiveness and release from your sins" (Amplified).

"For the forgiveness of your sins" (Living Bible, a paraphrase).

"Into remission of your sins" (Wycliffe).

"In order to the forgiveness of your sins" (Campbell-Macknight-Doddridge).

"Into the remission of your sins" (Rotherham).

"With a view to the remission of your sins" (Weymouth).

The other translations all carried the same connotation as the King James. (For further study of the above, see *Light from the Greek New Testament* by Boyce W. Blackwelder, pages 87-89.)

The words of Jesus in Matthew 26:27-28 also show that the word *for* in the phrase "for the remission of sins" means "in order to obtain": "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." It would make no sense for Him to say, "My blood of the new testament, which is shed because your sins have already been remitted"; rather the meaning is clearly, "My blood of the new testament, which is shed in order that your sins may be remitted."

This is not to suggest in any way that baptism itself, without faith and repentance, has any saving virtue. Neither the water nor the ceremony washes away sins; it is God who does so at baptism in response to obedient faith. Thus the factors of grace, faith, repentance and baptism are linked together in one composite unit to accomplish the intention of God to forgive and cleanse from sin.

At this crucial point, God pours out the Holy Spirit. If, as in the case of Cornelius and his household, someone receives the Spirit before being baptized, he is commanded immediately, that is without delay, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (See Acts 10:47-48.) Thus baptism is as important as any of the other factors in Acts 2:38; without it the salvation experience is not complete. An unbaptized believer is unknown to the New Testament.

We should also note that Acts 2:38 links baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins with repentance. To indicate that *for* means "because of" discredits the necessity of repentance. Repentance and baptism together bring remission—not repentance alone, nor baptism alone, but both thus fulfilling the commission of Christ in Luke 24:47.

### The Thief on the Cross

When one mentions the necessity of water baptism, those who oppose it often refer to the thief on the cross as an illustration of someone who was saved without baptism. What about the thief?

When we consider the thief, the dispensational aspect of the gospel arises immediately. Jesus, the testator, was yet alive when He said to the thief, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

The New Testament was not in force as long as Jesus the testator lived (Hebrews 9:16-17). The New Testament church had not yet come into existence when the thief died.

When Jesus drew His last breath and yielded up His life, His inheritance passed into the hands of the executors whom He had chosen—Peter, to whom He had given

the keys of the kingdom; and the rest of the apostles. Christ's salvation could only be bestowed according to the stipulations of His testament. At His death, burial, and resurrection, followed by Pentecost, a dispensation changed, and His inheritance passed into the hands of the apostolic church.

When the Apostle Peter answered the question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" with the support of all the apostles, he gave the right answer! Did anything change after that? Is anything other than Acts 2:38-39 the right answer? Can anyone give a different answer from Peter's and still proclaim the New Testament plan of salvation? Would anyone have the authority to change it? Did any of the apostles change it? Would a church council have the authority to alter, change, or modify it?

The answer to these questions is clearly no. When Peter used the keys for the Samaritans and Gentiles, they were saved in the same manner as in Acts 2:38-41. (See Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-48.) If the thief on the cross were alive today, he would receive the same experience, just as all New Testament believers do.

### In the Name of Jesus Christ

Many churches and ministers do not accept the following words of Peter in Acts 2:38 as essential: "And be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Traditionally most churches teach that the words of Matthew 28:19 recite the actual formula to be used in baptism: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

There is no scriptural account, however, that records

or insinuates the use of this latter terminology when baptizing. The references to baptism in Acts and the Epistles either state or imply that it took place with invocation of the name of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul asked in I Corinthians 1:13, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" His words indicate that Christians were baptized in the name of the One who was crucified for them—Jesus.

The other accounts of the Great Commission show that the singular, saving name that reveals the Godhead is Jesus: "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). "In my name" (Mark 16:17).

**No Other Name**

When the Apostle Peter explained the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, he emphasized the significance of the name Jesus:

*Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved* (Acts 4:10-12).

Verse 12 clearly states that Jesus is the only saving name. The only One who can remit sins is Jesus Christ, so His name is the only name under heaven whereby people

can be saved. It is not the water that remits sins, but the name called in faith over the penitent one as he is buried in water brings Jesus Himself, who remits his sins. Jesus removes his sins, taking them upon Himself and putting them under His blood. Any other name but the name of Jesus Christ does not fulfill the meaning and purpose of baptism. Only the name of Jesus Christ makes baptism a powerful force in remitting sin in God's plan of salvation. That is why the name of Jesus Christ is so important in baptism.

The only difference between the baptism of John the Baptist and that of the apostles was the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus is so important in baptism that Paul rebaptized the disciples of John at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6).

Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is a personal identification with Christ's death and burial (Romans 6:3-4). It invokes His shed blood.

The following four verses of Scripture emphasize the importance of the name of Jesus:

• "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:17). The only time the name of the Lord is called over a person as the result of a scriptural command is at baptism.

• "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (James 2:7).

• "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (I John 2:12).

• "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). Since baptism is both

in word and deed, it should be performed in the wonderful name of Jesus.

That the name of Jesus Christ is irrevocably linked to the sin question certainly no one can deny. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

**Old Testament Typology**

Several accounts in the Old Testament typify water baptism. The New Testament explicitly refers to two of them in relation to baptism.

First, the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea in their exodus from Egypt is a type of baptism: "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:2). How important was this baptism in the sea? The first indication of its importance is that God, not Moses, led them to that place by the cloud.

The second is that when they passed through the sea, they were completely cut off from their old life and enemy. It was a reality, not just a symbol, as we see by considering what would have happened to an Israelite who refused to cross. He would have either been killed or returned to slavehood. He would have remained under the domination of his old life and hard taskmaster. But the situation changed when and only when the Israelites crossed the sea. True, they had previously made up their minds to follow the cloud by faith—but to refuse to follow God through the sea would have negated that initial faith.

The second typology of baptism cited in the New Testament is found in I Peter 3:18-21. Let us read it in *The New Testament in Modern English*, a translation by J. B. Phillips: "Christ the just suffered for us the unjust,

to bring us to God. That meant the death of his body, but he was brought to life again in the spirit. It was in the spirit that he went and preached to the imprisoned souls of those who had been disobedient in the days of Noah—the days of God's great patience during the period of the building of the ark, in which eventually only eight souls were saved from the water. That water was a kind of prophetic parable of the water of baptism which now saves you. Baptism does not merely mean the washing of a dirty body; it is the appeal of a clear conscience towards God—a thing made possible by the power of Christ's resurrection."

What happened to those who did not get into the ark? There was only one way to safety, and that was in the ark. Everyone who did not go in it missed the opportunity to be saved. Peter called Noah's ark a perfect illustration of being admitted into the Christian "ark" by baptism.

A study of Old Testament typology also provides insight concerning the remission of sins. Under the law of Moses, whenever someone sinned, whether a ruler, a common person, or a priest, he was required to bring an offering to the Tabernacle. The priest brought a bullock, the ruler a kid goat, and the commoner a female kid goat or a female lamb. Each of these had to be without blemish. Before the offering was killed the offerer had to lay his hands upon the head of his sacrifice, thus identifying it as his own. The laying on of hands was a very important, required act that represented the transfer of his sin to the sacrificial animal. (See Leviticus 4:3-4, 22-24, 27-33.) The laying of hands on the sacrifice typifies our identification with Jesus Christ as the personal sacrifice for our sins. Since there was no way we could lay our

hands on the head of our sacrifice, God ordained baptism in the name of Jesus Christ as our identification with His sacrifice. Thus baptism in His name is a most beautiful truth that we should not ignore.

Remission of sin figures prominently in Christ's commission in John 20:22-23. He breathed upon His disciples as a symbol of the Holy Ghost that He commanded them to receive. Then He told them, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." He thereby placed into the hands of His disciples, though they were mortal, the awesome authority to remit or retain people's sins!

How, when, and where could they remit sins? How could they retain sins? Were there any rules, regulations, limitations, or qualifying factors to this statement? Could they simply listen to the confession of someone who had sinned against God, and by merely saying so, absolve him of his guilt? Did Jesus authorize them to speak the divine words, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," as in Mark 2:5? Could they mete out some form of penitence and promise absolution as a consequence? In light of all the Scriptures the obvious answer to the last three questions is no!

The question of remission of sins is a serious matter. Eternal life hangs in the balance. Sin separates God and humanity. (See Isaiah 59:1-2.) It must be dealt with for a person to be saved. Jesus pardoned people's sins while He was on earth (Luke 23:42-43; John 8:11; Mark 2:5), but what was to happen after He was gone? How did the apostles exercise the authority He transferred to them? Acts 2:38 explains how the church was to exercise the authority to remit sins. When the three thousand were

baptized in the name of Jesus Christ their sins were blotted out of the memory of God. (See Acts 2:41; Hebrews 10:17-18.) That is what remission means! Faith coupled with repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is the only means explained in the New Testament whereby a person's sins are remitted. God ordained, commissioned, and authorized it to be carried out in this manner, and nowhere in the Bible was this plan deleted, changed, or modified.

When a person believes, repents, and is baptized, then, his sins are remitted; if he refuses baptism his sins are retained. Thus baptism played a very important role in the Early Church—and should in the twentieth-century church also!

**Summary**

Following are verses of Scripture that either state or imply baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Stated**

1. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

2. Acts 8:16: "For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

3. Acts 10:48: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

4. Acts 19:5: "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

5. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and

be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

**Implied**

1. I Corinthians 1:13: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

2. I Corinthians 6:11: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

3. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

4. Acts 10:43: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

5. Acts 15:17: "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called."

6. James 2:7: "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"

7. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

8. Luke 24:47: "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

9. Mark 16:16-17: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. In my name shall they cast out devils."

10. I John 2:12: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."

11. Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us

as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death."

12. Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

13. Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism."

14. Acts 11:17: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; What was I, that I could withstand God?"

15. John 20:23: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

What a tremendous array of verses refer to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ! By contrast there is but one verse—Matthew 28:19—that could possibly refer to a threefold formula. Moreover, Matthew 28:19 speaks of only one name, not three!

To further study the baptism formula and Matthew 28:19 turn to page 185.

New Testament salvation is not complete with repentance and baptism. Acts 2:38 identifies another factor, "The gift of the Holy Ghost," which we will discuss in chapter 9.

# 9

# The Gift of the Holy Ghost

*And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost* (Acts 2:38).

The gift of the Holy Ghost is the extension of God Himself, through His Spirit, into human lives. It is for everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ—specifically in His death, burial and resurrection—to the point of obedience. (See Ephesians 1:13; Acts 5:32.) After telling his hearers about the gift of the Holy Ghost in response to the question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" the Apostle Peter continued in Acts 2:39, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

What promise did he speak about? Clearly he referred to the experience they had just witnessed—what they had seen and heard—"the promise of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:33). Some had previously asked, "What meaneth this?"

(Acts 2:12). In answering that question, the Apostle Peter explained in detail the event that had just transpired. His answer, coupled with what they had witnessed, brought deep conviction upon many in the multitude to the degree that they inquired what they could do about it.

Undoubtedly they wondered if they could now receive the Spirit as the 120 just had. Could the joy that flooded the hearts of the upper-room believers flood theirs in like manner? Would they too speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance? (See Acts 2:4.) In other words, would the continued outpouring on subsequent converts correspond with the initial experience, which they had just witnessed?

This is a hot issue even today! Some proclaim, "Pentecost was a one-time event, never to be repeated again." Others say, "Speaking in tongues happened for a short period of time, but when the canon of Scripture was completed it became unnecessary and hence disappeared from Christianity." A variety of answers are available. But are they right?

It is evident from Paul's question to the Ephesians in Acts 19:2—"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"—that he expected every believer to receive the Spirit and to know when they did. It was no surprise, then, that when he laid hands on those whom he addressed, "the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). Evidently this experience was the normal expectation of the Apostle Paul!

Cornelius and his household also received the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues when Peter preached to them. The Jews who accompanied Peter did not expect

these Gentiles to receive the Spirit, but they had to admit that they did because they observed the uniform, expected, indisputable sign: "For they heard them speak with tongues" (Acts 10:46).

Unbelieving theologians emphasize that Acts contains only three accounts of people receiving the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues. Hence, they deduct, no others spoke in tongues when they were saved.

Is this a valid conclusion? Because something is not mentioned in every instance, does that mean it did not occur? In other words, must the entire gamut of salvation's factors be spelled out in detail in every case?

The answer is no. To illustrate this truth, let us imagine that I said, "The policeman jumped into his car and sped off in pursuit of the bandit." I do not have to explain that he turned the key in the ignition, engaged the clutch once the engine started, shifted into low gear, let up on the clutch, went about fifty yards before shifting into second gear, and finally went into high gear, giving the car more gas as he pursued the bandit. Once the method of operating an automobile is understood, no one would go into all the detail over and over again.

A good biblical example of this point is the account of the Israelites moving the Tabernacle from place to place. In Numbers 4, God gave instructions to Moses explaining how the priests were to prepare the furniture of the Tabernacle for moving. The sons of Kohath were to carry all the furniture; the sons of Gershon were to bear the curtains, coverings of badger skins, hangings for the door, court, binding cords, and instruments of service; the sons of Merari were to bear the boards, bars, pillars, sockets, and their pins and cords.

Numbers 9:15-18 explains how and when the Israelites moved the Tabernacle. A cloud covered the Tabernacle, and when the cloud was taken up from the Tabernacle, the Israelites journeyed. Where the cloud rested, there the Israelites pitched their tents, and there they remained as long as the cloud stayed upon the Tabernacle.

These instructions were not repeated every time the Tabernacle was moved. Nor does the Bible repeat that the cloud moved and stopped every time the Israelites moved. But all of these things are understood as taking place each time we read that Israel moved. They are implied. For example, Numbers 33:1-49 records that Israel moved thirty-one times after God gave them the Tabernacle plan, yet none of the above instructions were mentioned, even though they were necessary for moving.

Another common argument today is that speaking in tongues is merely a gift given to some Christians as described in I Corinthians 12-14 and that people do not speak in tongues as part of the salvation experience. But I Corinthians describes the public gift of tongues used for messages to the congregation, which not everyone exercises. By contrast, Acts 2:4, 10:46, and 19:6 speak of tongues as the initial sign of receiving the Holy Ghost. The three accounts in Acts are clearly not examples of the public gift of tongues, for the instructions of I Corinthians 14:13, 26-28 were not followed. For example, more than three people spoke in tongues, and they did not take turns but all spoke at once. There is no mention of interpreters. This can only mean that speaking in tongues as the sign of receiving the Holy Ghost, though the same in essence, has an entirely different purpose

from the gift mentioned in I Corinthians 12-14.

This concept should not be difficult to grasp, for the same is true of faith. The faith that brings salvation, though the same in essence, is different in purpose and operation from the special gift of faith given only to some Christians and mentioned in I Corinthians 12 also.

Let us further examine speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Many people do not realize that speaking in tongues has this function in Scripture—or perhaps they ignore it.

When God gave the law at Sinai, which foreshadowed the Day of Pentecost, He did so in a manner that those present would never forget it. It was such an awesome event that the Israelites requested for God not to speak to them anymore in that same manner.

Exodus 19:16-19 records the dramatic signs—both sights and sounds—that accompanied the giving of the law: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice."

Then God gave the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:18-19 describes the reaction of the people: "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and

the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:18-19).

This God-given event would not soon be forgotten. God meant it to be that way. It appears that the Israelites could take lightning, thundering, quaking, smoke, dark clouds, and fire, but the voice of God was so awesome that they requested not to hear it again. God never wanted them to forget that voice.

Later the Lord reminded Moses of this event: "Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. . . . Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? . . . Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire" (Deuteronomy 4:10, 33, 36).

On the birthday of the New Testament church at the second Pentecost, the real Pentecost, God did not speak with a voice from heaven, but instead He began to speak out of His new dwelling place—redeemed, cleansed humanity. First came the sound of a rushing mighty wind, then cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each one present, and finally the voice of God spoke through these disciples as they were filled with His Spirit. It was the Spirit of God who gave the utterance. It was not His voice from heaven, as at the first, but He was now speaking out of His new residence, yielded men and women. Although He

used their voices, He put the words in their mouths!

This was God's doing! Since He is sovereign, He can do and act as He pleases. In this instance, God did what He had never done before, yet He did not cease to be what He had always been! Speaking in tongues at the baptism of the Holy Ghost comes from God. To the receiver, it is a precious experience to know that God within Him is speaking in evidence of His presence. He spoke from heaven on Mount Sinai, but since He now fills people with His Spirit, He now speaks from them.

Of course, there is much more to receiving the Holy Spirit than speaking in tongues. As important as this sign is, other things of great worth also accompany the baptism of the Spirit including new life, joy, and the inner assurance of God's abiding presence. The words of Jesus in Matthew 28:20 are fulfilled: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

In my own personal experience, until I was filled, the Spirit always seemed to be over yonder, up there, or in another person, but when I received the Holy Ghost I suddenly became aware that Christ was now in me. And He has been *in* me ever since. It is impossible to express the value of having and knowing His abiding presence!

The Pentecostal movement is sometimes criticized for tarrying or seeking for the Holy Ghost. If the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the seal of a person's faith, why should he have to seek it? Is it not a free gift? These are legitimate questions and deserve reasonable answers.

We must understand that not everyone's faith is perfect faith. People often approach the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost with skepticism, misunderstanding, unbelief, and prejudice. A person's former church may

have been rife with severe criticism, as mine was, and much seeking is necessary to see the scriptural perspective on the subject. As an evangelist and pastor, I have noticed that a person with little knowledge of the Bible or Christianity is often more likely to receive the Holy Ghost when he repents than someone from a church where the baptism of the Holy Ghost is held in derision. A denominational church member often seeks for a while, trying to understand and to build his faith.

Faith can be defective, imperfect, limited, small, feeble, shattered, fervid or great. Faith is based on knowledge, for faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17), and someone can have inadequate, perverted, impaired, or limited knowledge. For example, Apollos and the Ephesians did not know that Jesus had come, been crucified, and been resurrected and that the Holy Ghost had been given. Their knowledge was imperfect and limited, leaving them with inadequate faith. When they were made knowledgeable of these matters, and faith gripped their hearts, they were rebaptized in Jesus' name and received the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues just as the other believers. (See Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-6.)

Another very common hindrance to receiving is a lack of commitment to Christ. Many seekers make a token commitment, but not a total dedication to God. Often someone approaches God with condemnation and is reluctant to deal with the underlying sin. But I John 3:20-22 states, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him,

because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Condemnation is a formidable foe of faith; no one can ignore it and find acceptance with God.

To receive the Holy Ghost, it is necessary for a person to get his priorities in proper alignment. It is very easy for him to be consumed with a host of things in his life to the extent that Jesus is far down on the list. If He is not first, then these things will rob that person of faith. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

A rearranging of priorities will make a big difference! In my own life I had much rearranging to do until my priorities were properly aligned. But when I did, the Holy Ghost was there awaiting entrance. The seeking that I needed to do consisted of getting my priorities right, not a lot of weeping, begging, pleading, or praying, although perhaps unnecessarily, I did a lot of that too. It did not hurt me, however, as it helped to keep me seeking.

These are some things that can keep a person from receiving the Holy Ghost until they are eliminated. The seeker must eliminate the hindering causes so as to increase faith and open the door for God to work.

Jesus gave us a beautiful promise for receiving the Holy Spirit: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg,

will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:9-13).

**Summary**

The following verses of Scripture either plainly describe or imply the gift of the Holy Ghost.

1. Luke 11:13: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

2. Luke 24:49: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

3. John 1:33: "And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

4. John 3:5, 8: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

5. John 7:39: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

6. John 14:16-17: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with

you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

7. John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

8. John 20:22: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

9. Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

10. Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

11. Acts 2:4: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

12. Acts 2:38-39: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

13. Acts 5:32: "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

14. Acts 8:15, 17: "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy

Ghost. . . . Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.".

15. Acts 9:17: "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

16. Acts 10:44-46: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

17. Acts 13:52: "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."

18. Acts 15:8: "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us."

19. Acts 19:2, 6: "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? . . . And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

20. Romans 8:9: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

21. I Corinthians 3:16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

22. I Corinthians 6:19: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

23. I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

24. II Corinthians 1:22: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

25. II Corinthians 5:5: "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

26. Galatians 3:2: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

27. Galatians 3:14: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

28. Ephesians 1:13-14: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

29. I Thessalonians 4:8: ". . . but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit."

30. Titus 3:5-6: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

31. Hebrews 6:4: ". . . and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost."

32. I John 3:24: "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

33. I John 4:13: "Hereby know we that we dwell in

him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

In the next chapter we will look at two men in Acts—one a Jew, the other a Gentile—and see how grace, faith, repentance, water baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost were all part of their experiences with God.

# 10

# The Salvation Experiences of Paul and Cornelius

In one of Paul's great triumphant moments he proclaimed, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

At the beginning of the church age, the apostles did not understand that Gentiles, as well as Jews, would be a part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. About eight years after Pentecost, the first Gentiles entered the New Testament church by the saving grace of God. This was a mystery that God had kept secret since the world began, but was now made manifest to His saints (Ephesians 3:3-6). According to this passage of Scripture, both Jew and Gentile were saved in a similar manner.

God's wonderful plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles caused Paul to exclaim "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how

unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

Let us now examine the salvation experiences of Saul of Tarsus, a Jew, and Cornelius, a Gentile, in the light of Acts 2:38 and the five factors we have previously outlined. Each of their stories is partially related in three different chapters in Acts. The full stories emerge only as these three accounts are viewed together. If every salvation experience recorded in Acts were given the same coverage as these two, the end result would be similar, for God has but one plan of salvation!

**Saul of Tarsus**

Saul met the Lord on the Damascus road. Before this time he had violently opposed the gospel. In Acts 26:9-11 he told how he punished the saints often in every synagogue, compelling them to blaspheme. He shut them up in prisons, and when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them. Acts 8:1 records that Saul consented to the execution of Stephen, but Acts 26:10 uses the plural pronoun *they*, indicating that Saul consented to more than one such execution. But God arrested Saul (Paul), stopped him cold in his tracks, knocked him to the ground, and left him stunned and bewildered. The bright light that shone around him blinded him for three days, making it necessary for him to have assistance in getting around.

Although Paul's story is told three times in Acts, not

once is the grace of God mentioned. He referred to its role in I Corinthians 15:10, however: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain." Grace was in the blinding light that arrested and knocked him to the ground! In no way did he merit this attention from heaven; God graciously arranged this confrontation to lead him to salvation.

Likewise, no account of Paul's salvation mentions a word about faith. But we know he believed because he obeyed. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) was a confession of his faith. Although faith is not expressly stated, it is certainly implied. In writing to others about believing, Paul included himself, indicating that an active faith resided in his heart, supplanting the unbelief that had held him captive for so long (Romans 13:11; Galatians 2:16; II Timothy 1:12).

The first two factors, grace and faith, are present in Paul's story, although only by implication. There is no difficulty in assuming that both were actively involved in his salvation experience.

The word *repentance* in Paul's experience does not surface until Acts 26:19-20. There he explained that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision but soon began preaching that both Jews and Gentiles should repent and turn to God and do works befitting repentance. Certainly he would not have required of others what he had not done himself. His manner of speech reflected his attitude toward repentance. He made a turn of 180 degrees.

When did he repent? No doubt this occurred at the very time he discovered who was speaking to him from heaven. His whole attitude did an about-face when he inquired,

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This question is what repentance is all about. Without doubt, Paul retained this attitude during the next three days. He had sufficient time to reflect on his past as he patiently waited for Ananias. In the light of the encounter he had with Christ on the Damascus road, no doubt every Christian he had persecuted or put to death swept back through his mind, leaving a trail of deep regret. All of the blasphemous names he had called Christ probably plagued his mind unmercifully.

When Ananias finally arrived and told him to be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord, Paul was ready (Acts 22:16). Those were some of the sweetest words he ever heard. In between his Damascus-road encounter with Christ and the coming of Ananias, he probably died, as we often say, a thousand deaths. The words Jesus said—"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5)—probably coursed through his mind repeatedly with tormenting, convicting force.

In I Corinthians 15:8 Paul stated that he saw Christ, apparently referring to his experience on the Damascus road. If so, he must have seen those piercing eyes as they looked at him out of the midst of that bright light. During his blindness, his mind's eye must have traveled back to that road many times. Most assuredly he had sufficient time to marshall all of his forces in prayer to God in repentance.

My father suffered for two or three days of extreme agony when he could not seem to feel forgiveness from God. One morning as he went to feed the hogs, in order to get the corn he had to unwind a wire on a slat corncrib.

He put his bushel basket between his stomach and the crib to free his hands. He then reached up to unwind the wire and start the corn rolling. As he reached up he was weeping and praying, "O Lord, aren't you ever going to forgive me?" As the corn started rolling, so did the blessings, and he came away from that corncrib experiencing the feeling of forgiveness to such an extent that he did not return to feed the hogs for three days. He was overcome with the joy and release of forgiveness. I heard him testify about this experience many times before the Lord took him. No doubt, Paul was greatly relieved to hear Ananias speak to him about the washing away of his sins. That meant the end of the guilt he felt so grievously or the blasphemous things he had said about Christ and the atrocities he had committed against the saints of God.

The full story of Paul's baptism is not found in Acts 9 although it is mentioned. Nothing is said about it in Acts 26. But in Acts 22 we find the full story. There Paul, in witnessing to his captors, recounted his experience on the Damascus road, the blinding light, and meeting Ananias on the third day. He recalled how Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Though he had submitted to Christ three days prior to baptism, his sins were not washed away until he was baptized in the name of the Lord, which is Jesus.

It is interesting that baptism is not mentioned in all the accounts of Paul's conversion. Apparently mentioning it twice was enough. Some things, after being repeated several times, are assumed. But just because Paul's baptism was not mentioned every time does not mean it did not take place!

Neither Acts 22 nor Acts 26 speaks of Paul's baptism of the Holy Ghost, and Acts 9 does not tell the full story either. Acts 9:17-18 simply says, "And Ananias went . . . and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." While this account does not describe what happened when Paul received the Holy Ghost, in I Corinthians 14:18 he wrote, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." Clearly, he spoke in tongues when he received the Holy Ghost, just as everyone else did.

It is important to realize that even with three accounts of Paul's salvation experience recorded in Acts, the entire story is not told in any one place. To understand it fully, we must blend the three accounts together with details from other passages of Scripture, including Paul's epistles. Grace brought about his encounter with Christ; faith gripped his heart when he heard who was speaking to him from heaven and moved him to repentance. Faith and repentance caused him to obey God by going to Damascus and doing what Ananias said, that is, being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and receiving the Holy Ghost. When he left Ananias he was a new man, ready for heaven and ready to do the work of God.

### Cornelius the Centurion

The Apostle Peter used the keys of the kingdom for the first time in Acts 2:38, opening the door to the Jews. He also opened the door to the Gentiles by going to

Caesarea in response to an invitation from Cornelius (Acts 10). He thus began fulfilling the last phrase of Acts 1:8, taking the gospel to "the uttermost part of the earth" —the Gentile world.

Acts 10-11 contains a most interesting account of the salvation of Cornelius. Cornelius was a Gentile, a leader of an Italian band of soldiers, and he had a strong inclination toward God. He was a sincere, prayerful, benevolent man who feared God and had transferred these qualities of character to his household. While fasting, he had an encounter with an angel, who commended him for his prayer and almsgiving. The angel then gave him instructions from God, telling him to send to Joppa for a man named Simon Peter, who, the angel said, "shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14).

Cornelius sent three men, who arrived at Joppa while Peter was on the housetop praying. The timing was perfect! A few hours earlier might have brought a negative response from Peter, but that housetop prayer meeting completely rearranged his perspective!

Although grace is not mentioned in any of the accounts, the angelic appearance to Cornelius and the housetop experience of Peter certainly originated in heaven. The angel came from heaven and the sheet in Peter's vision was let down from heaven. Even the angel's message about salvation had its origin in heaven. The salvation of Cornelius resulted from God's grace, and he received it through faith unto obedience.

When the Apostle Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, he began to preach the Word of God that would save them. He spoke about Jesus and His ministry, finally

reaching the story of His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection.

At this point Peter emphasized the role of faith: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). He challenged Cornelius and his group to believe the message about Jesus Christ, and they did.

Then it happened! Pentecost blazed again! The Spirit did not come with the sound of a rushing, mighty wind and tongues of fire, but the Spirit did cause speaking in tongues and magnifying of God.

The six Jewish Christians who accompanied Peter were astonished to see Gentiles receiving the Holy Ghost, yet they had to admit that it was happening. How did they know these Gentiles received the Holy Ghost? Acts 10:46 explains, "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

When Peter recounted this experience to the apostles at Jerusalem, he identified it as the baptism of the Holy Ghost that Jesus had promised just before He ascended (Acts 11:15-16). Acts 11, and the later account in Acts 15 do not mention speaking in tongues but simply say that the Gentiles received the Holy Ghost. We see once again that not everything that took place in a salvation experience was recorded in each account. In this case, the Early Church clearly understood without being told that whenever someone received the Holy Ghost he spoke in tongues.

It appears that the six men who accompanied Peter did not approve of baptizing Gentiles, but after the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and those gathered at his house with him, Peter addressed the six, asking, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which

have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47).

Since no one objected, he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:48). (Most versions of the Bible say "in the name of Jesus Christ," since that is what the oldest manuscripts say.)

From Acts 10 we find in Cornelius's experience of salvation grace (implied), faith, the gift of the Holy Ghost with speaking in tongues, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Only the factor of repentance is missing. But when Peter gave his account to the apostles when he returned to Jerusalem, the assembly rightly assumed that repentance had taken place: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

Although the story of Cornelius is mentioned in three chapters of Acts, only chapter 10 records their water baptism and their speaking in tongues. The other two accounts—Acts 11:15-18 and Acts 15:7-11—make no mention of either of these things. Can we thereby conclude that they did not take place? Of course not! The silence in the other two accounts does not change the clear statement in the one account. From this example we see that silence in other incidences of salvation in Acts does not mean all of the factors of salvation were not present.

We should note that Acts 11:17 does contain a strong implication of baptism. When Peter asked, "What was I, that I could withstand God?" he was actually referring to the water baptism he had commanded (Acts 10:48). He was saying to the apostles, "I could see no reason, neither could the six who were with me, why these whom God

had baptized in the Holy Ghost should not be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ as all of us had been and as I have preached since Pentecost."

**Summary**

Both Saul, a Jew, and Cornelius, a Gentile, were saved by grace. Saul was captured by the grace of God on the Damascus road. Cornelius was accosted by the grace of God through an angel from heaven!

Both responded by faith that was obedient. Saul asked what Jesus would have him do, and his humble question demonstrated faith. Cornelius believed and obeyed by sending for Simon Peter.

Both men embraced repentance. Saul headed for Damascus as commanded, acting upon his faith and waiting for further instructions. Cornelius opened his house to Simon Peter, an initial act of turning to Christ, even though as yet he did not understand.

Both men were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, although not all the accounts of their salvation mention baptism. Paul's baptism is stated twice, Cornelius's only once.

Both men received the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Again, this experience is not mentioned in all of the accounts.

Thus all the five factors of salvation are mentioned in these accounts except grace, and it is implied. The salvation experiences of both Paul and Cornelius fulfill and harmonize with Acts 2:38.

The following chapters will examine every salvation experience in Acts in the light of the Acts 2:38 message.

# 11

# Salvation Experiences, Acts 1-12

In this chapter and the two following we will examine every salvation experience recorded in Acts. In particular, the five factors involved in salvation—grace, faith, repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and receiving the Holy Ghost—will be the focus of our study.

The Book of Acts describes, alludes to, or implies thirty-one incidents of salvation: Acts 2:1-4; 2:37-41; 2:47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:12-17; 8:35-39; 9:3-20; 9:31; 9:35; 9:42; 10:1-11:18; 11:21; 11:24; 12:24; 13:12; 13:48; 14:1; 14:21; 16:5; 16:14-15; 16:30-34; 17:4; 17:11-12; 17:34; 18:8; 18:24-26; 19:1-6; 19:18; 28:24.

Many of these references are extremely brief, with little or no description of the actual experiences. In most cases, one or more factors are assumed (taken for granted as true) or implied (expressed indirectly).

F. F. Bruce's commentary on Acts repeatedly points out that some factors are implied in certain passages

although not stated in so many words. He commented on Acts 3:19, "Nothing is said there about baptism, although it is no doubt implied (the idea of an unbaptized Christian is simply not entertained in the New Testament)."[1] In writing about another incident he stated, "To be sure, in such a brief summary various details would inevitably be left out."[2]

Regarding Acts 2:38-41 Bruce wrote, "Believing is not explicitly mentioned in verse 38, but is certainly implied, and is confirmed by the opening words of verse 41. . . . Those who believed his message were baptized in token of their repentance, for the remission of their sins. We are certainly intended to understand that they also received the Holy Spirit, although this is not said in so many words."[3]

Similarly, he remarked about the conversion of Cornelius, "There is no explicit mention of faith in the immediate context, but it is inevitably implied, and is suggested more definitely in Peter's report in Acts 11:17."[4] Bruce again used the words *implies* and *assumes* in his footnotes on Acts 19:1-6.[5]

As we study the accounts of salvation experiences in Acts, we will frequently note that, although not mentioned specifically, each factor involved in salvation is there by implication.

**Acts 2:1-4**

*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance* (Acts 2:4).

Chapters 5 and 6 have already discussed this account,

but another issue needs to be addressed. Some people insist that if we expect speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost today then we must also expect the other events of the Day of Pentecost.

In analyzing Acts 2, however, we discover many things about this event that are never repeated again in the Bible.

1. Location. Never again was the outpouring of the Spirit restricted to one place, as on this day.

2. Day. This first outpouring occurred on the Day of Pentecost. In God's plan it could not have occurred before this particular day, and it would never be so restricted again.

3. Time. Nine o'clock on Pentecost morning would never be required again.

4. Wind. The sound of a rushing, mighty wind was never repeated again. Although Jesus mentioned the sound of wind in John 3:8, He referred to the effects of the wind (Spirit) that all would experience when they were born again.

5. Tongues of fire. There is no account of the reappearance of tongues of fire, although John the Baptist promised that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. This was the only time that each recipient was singled out in advance by having visible tongues of fire rest on them.

6. The number of people. Nowhere does the Bible state that only 120 or precisely 120 can receive the Holy Ghost at one time although on the Day of Pentecost number was probably symbolic or a typological fulfillment. (See II Chronicles 5:12-14.)

7. The multitude. God's plan included having a large, strategic number of people present to witness

this inauguration day.

Thus we have seven things mentioned that never occurred again in this same manner. Several other things that happened on that day that did occur again.

1. Proper attitude. Being in one accord is always a prerequisite to receiving the Holy Ghost. To be in one accord means to be in agreement. The recipients were all in agreement with:

a. God and His plan to redeem humanity,

b. His command to wait until they were "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49), and

c. A proper frame of heart and mind: "continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53); "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14). A proper attitude is one of the abiding principles of that day.

2. A personal endowment. Each Christian today still receives a personal baptism and filling of the Spirit.

3. Speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. This sign is another of the abiding principles of Pentecost. Speaking in tongues is the only miraculous sign repeated and recorded again in Acts, for unlike the others, it signifies the actual baptism and filling of an individual (Acts 2:4).

The result of the Day of Pentecost was an individual baptism and filling with the Holy Ghost. This personal experience is the purpose of Pentecost and succeeding outpourings, both then and now. God makes people over again by cleansing them and filling them with His Spirit, making them a part of the church! Thus we are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10).

**Acts 2:37-41**

*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls* (Acts 2:41).

Chapter 7 has already discussed this account. We find faith, repentance, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, but nothing is said about grace, and it is not expressly stated that the 3000 received the Holy Ghost.

The 3000 were among those who had just witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and had asked, "What meaneth this?" They were ready to obey and receive what they had just witnessed and had been promised. The promise of the Spirit was a definite part of Peter's answer. Can we not assume, as F. F. Bruce does, that they received the Holy Ghost? Moreover, would not they have received the Spirit in the same manner as the 120?

If they did not speak in tongues as in Acts 2:4, what evidence did they receive? Would they have been satisfied in not receiving the same experience as the 120? The burden of proving that they did not speak in other tongues must fall on those who would deny it.

**Acts 2:47**

*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

It is clear from Acts 2 that the city of Jerusalem was deeply moved by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the 3,120. The apostles did many wonders and signs,

which apparently brought deep conviction of sin upon people and showed them their need of salvation.

At first there did not seem to be any opposition to the newly formed church. The believers had great favor with the people. Evidently there was a steady flow of people who desired to be saved and to join the fellowship of believers.

How did the Lord add these people to the church? Nothing is said about grace, faith, repentance, baptism, or the Holy Ghost. But should we not assume that God added these to the church in the same manner as those in Acts 2:1-4 and 2:41, as well as Saul and Cornelius later? Since this is the only salvation anyone knew about, how else could they be saved?

**Acts 4:1-4**

*Many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand* (Acts 4:4).

There was a furious, almost violent stir in Jerusalem over the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful. A curious, questioning crowd gathered to seek an explanation of this open, acknowledged miracle. Whereas there had not been previous opposition to the infant church, the sight of this crowd stirred up the priests. They knew they were face to face with some very disturbing, inexplicable facts.

Peter preached another powerful sermon that brought further conviction on the multitudes. He accused them of killing the Prince of life and told them the kingdom of God was now near them. He concluded, "Unto you first

God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

The convicting point of Peter's preaching was the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It infuriated the priests to the extent that they arrested the apostles. But it was too late! The healing and preaching had its effect; 5000 men believed and aligned themselves with the apostolic band.

Nothing is said here about grace, repentance, baptism, or the Holy Ghost. Believing is the only factor mentioned. In the light of what we have already examined, we can assume that the factors not mentioned are implied. Among the thirty-one accounts of salvation in Acts, three connect believing with baptism, and three others connect believing with both baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost. Those who say that the salvation experience of these people was different from everyone else heretofore and from every other detailed account in Acts have the burden of proof.

### Acts 5:12-14

*And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women* (Acts 5:14).

As a result of the untimely deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, who had lied to God, a great stir occurred within the early church and also among those in the community who became aware of this event. Fear gripped the believers and many others. They viewed firsthand the devastating effects of hypocritical actions. Only those who were sincere and genuine believed. Nothing is said about

grace, repentance, baptism, or the Holy Ghost. There is no description of the salvation experience itself, but as in Acts 4:14, we have no right to assume that their conversion would be any different from everyone else's.

### Acts 6:7

*And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*

The first bit of internal trouble had developed in the infant church: the Grecians murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the distribution of food.

There was probably more behind this division than appears on the surface. For quite some time tension had existed between the Hebrews and the Hellenistic (Greek) Jews, and it now carried over into the fellowship of the church. The rift was serious enough to cause deep concern among the apostles. The problem had to be solved before a further cleavage occurred.

As any enterprise grows, problems occur. Usually they are people problems. The church was no exception. The action taken by the apostles constituted the development of church government and organization. The church chose seven Holy Ghost-filled men to handle the situation. God certainly blessed this step as Acts 6:7 shows. A revival broke out, spearheaded by the new men appointed. Acts then focuses on the ministry of two of these men, Stephen and Philip.

Not one of the factors of salvation are mentioned in

this account. But how can anybody deny that the new disciples and the company of priests all believed, repented, were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and received the Holy Ghost just as all the others had and that their salvation was the result of the grace of God? The account specifically states that the converted priests were "obedient." Surely they obeyed the fundamental commands of repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost; if not, what else was there to obey?

**Acts 8:12-17**

*But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

In this account the Apostle Peter used the keys of the kingdom a second time. Samaria was one of the areas the gospel was to reach into (Acts 1:8), and the apostles sent Peter and John to see if things were in order. The Samaritans were neither Jew nor Gentile but a racial mixture of

the two. The Samaritans and Jews ordinarily had no dealings with each other, and for that reason the Samaritans were singled out as a distinct group of people that needed to hear the gospel.

As strange as it may seem, apparently the apostles did not make any obvious preparations to fulfill the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8. God had to send a severe persecutor in the person of Saul of Tarsus to get the gospel out of Jerusalem and Judea. Because of this persecution, Philip went to the Samaritans, a despised race of people as far as the Jews were concerned. It must have taken a lot of courage for Philip to go, not knowing what would happen when Jerusalem heard about it. But to his credit, he went in the will of God.

When Peter and John arrived, they found believers who had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ but who had not yet received the Holy Ghost. After they prayed and laid hands on them the Holy Ghost came on them. Nothing is said about grace, repentance, or speaking in tongues. If we can believe that grace and repentance are implied, then we also have a right to believe that speaking in tongues is likewise implied. Certainly an unusual miracle occurred, as shown by the action of Simon the sorcerer. When he observed that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money to purchase the ability to do the same.

What did he observe? It had to be a manifestation of the Spirit that attracted his attention. If nothing out of the ordinary had occurred, he would have had no incentive to buy this power. In light of the other accounts of receiving the Holy Ghost, it is apparent that this miracu-

lous sign was speaking in tongues.

Even most non-Pentecostal scholars agree with this conclusion. For example F. F. Bruce observed, "The context leaves us in no doubt that their reception of the Spirit was attended by external manifestations such as had marked His descent on the earliest disciples at Pentecost."[6] A. T. Robertson stated that the structure of the Greek language here "shows plainly that those who received the gift of the Holy Spirit spoke with tongues."[7] John Trapp wrote that the Holy Spirit fell upon the Samaritans "in those extraordinary gifts of tongues and miracles."[8]

Frank Farrell similarly acknowledged, "In Caesarea, tongues accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the first Gentile converts (Acts 10:44-46; 11:15), and was perhaps one of the external manifestations of the receiving of the Spirit by the earliest Samaritan believers."[9]

Charles Conn wrote, "Glossolalia was so much a part of the apostolic scene that its presence was assumed in the gospel record. The miracle of tongues was simply an accepted and expected attendant to the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers."[10]

Carl Brumback listed the following authors and commentaries who believed that speaking in tongues accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit as Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans: Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, Thomas Scott, Joseph Benson, William Burkitt, Charles Ellicott, Herman Olshausen, Philip Schaff, Bernhard Weiss, the *Lutheran Commentary*, Albert Barnes, D. D. Wheedon, Alexander Maclaren, H. B. Hackett, J. S. Excell, William Robertson, M. F. Sadler, J. G. Butler,

Conybeare and Howson, Henry Alford, W. R. Nicoll, and the *Pulpit Commentary.*[11] Most, perhaps all, of these men wrote before the present day outpouring of the Holy Ghost and were not of the Pentecostal persuasion.

**Acts 8:35-39**

*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

After being involved in an exciting citywide campaign in which many were healed and won to God, Philip was ushered off by an angel to deal with a single individual in a desert country. To his credit he went, doubting nothing.

An Ethiopian eunuch was returning home from Jerusalem, where he had gone to worship. He had probably heard some things about Jesus there, enough to stir up his curiosity. While journeying home he read from the Scriptures.

The Spirit urged Philip to overtake the chariot. As the chariot lumbered along, Philip ran alongside it and heard

the Ethiopian reading from Isaiah 53. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The eunuch replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" With that the eunuch requested Philip to join him in the chariot.

Philip started at that passage of Scripture (Isaiah 53:7-8) and preached Jesus to him.

A great truth emerges from this account. As on the Day of Pentecost and many other incidents in Acts, when someone preaches Jesus Christ, he must preach baptism as a necessary part of the way to Him. Philip obviously did so; otherwise the eunuch would not have known to request baptism. Those who deny the essentiality of water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ have a difficult time explaining why Philip preached baptism so soon and with such urgency in that desert country.

Only two of the factors involved in salvation are mentioned here: belief and baptism. Surely the grace of God brought these two men together in this place, but grace is not explicitly mentioned. Neither is anything said about repentance or receiving the Holy Ghost, although we do know that the eunuch received an experience that caused him to rejoice, which was apparently the gift of the Holy Ghost. We can assume that the eunuch was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, just as everyone else in Acts was, especially since we know that Philip baptized in that name (Acts 8:16) and that he "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Since Philip was present when the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost, surely he expected the eunuch to receive the Spirit also. F. F. Bruce concludes, "It is a safe inference that he did receive the Spirit."[12]

### Acts 9:3-20

See Chapter 11 for a detailed explanation of this account of Paul's conversion. All five factors of salvation were prominent in Paul's salvation.

### Acts 9:26-31

*Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied* (Acts 9:31).

Saul's conversion brought rest from persecution and opened the door for a revival. Acts 9:31 uses the word *multiplied* to indicate a great ingathering. This is the second time this word is used in connection with a great ingathering of people. The other time was after the deacons had been appointed and trouble within the infant church had been averted. Now the church passed another milestone when Jesus arrested its great persecutor. The first incident threatened the unity of the church from within; persecution threatened it from without. But God intervened in both situations, inciting great confidence and assurance within the church. Revival resulted both times. The scope of this revival encompassed all of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

How was this great multitude added to the church? There is no description—no mention of grace, faith, repentance, baptism, or receiving the Holy Ghost, although the presence of the Holy Ghost is clearly stated. In the light of the other incidents already examined, we can assume that each factor was involved.

**Acts 9:34-35**

*And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.*

Lydda was a city on the road between Jerusalem and Joppa located on the south edge of the plain of Sharon. It had a population in New Testament days of around ten thousand. The plain of Sharon was approximately fifty miles long and eight to ten miles wide along the Mediterranean coast, stretching from Joppa on the south to Caesarea on the north.

The healing of a prominent person would attract attention in any area. Not much is known about Aeneas, but apparently he was well-known, because his healing resulted in widespread conversions. It started a revival that set the stage for the next great event in that area—the raising of Dorcas from the dead.

In this great turning to the Lord in Lydda and the coastal area of Sharon, nothing is said about any factors involved in salvation, although the word *turned* at least implies repentance. Still, since no factor is mentioned, we must assume all of them if we assume any. We have no right to exclude one or two arbitrarily.

**Acts 9:36-42**

*And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord* (Acts 9:42).

While Peter was at Lydda, Dorcas, a disciple in nearby Joppa, died. The church summoned Peter, and when he prayed for Dorcas she rose from the dead. This second miraculous event to take place in the plain of Sharon brought great revival to Joppa and helped set the stage for another momentous occasion, the salvation of the Gentiles. The raising of Dorcas placed Peter in Joppa, where the three men from Cornelius would find him.

The healing of Aeneas had started the great revival in Lydda and the plain of Sharon, and then the raising of Dorcas from the dead added momentum to that revival, spreading the gospel throughout Joppa. The only factor mentioned in this incident is belief. As already noted, the use of the word *believed* not only indicates faith in Christ generally but also incorporates obedience, thereby implying all of the other factors of salvation.

### Acts 10:1-11:18

Chapter 11 has already examined this account of the salvation of Cornelius and his household thoroughly. All five factors of salvation are prominent.

### Acts 11:19-21

*And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord* (Acts 11:21).

Because of persecution in the wake of Stephen's death, the gospel had made its way into various areas somewhat distant from Jerusalem, particularly Phenice (Phoenicia), Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. Some of the converted Cyprian and Cyrenian Jews came to Antioch

and preached to the Hellenists there. Luke recorded that a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Faith is expressly stated, and repentance is implied. The context also refers to grace (verse 23) and to the Holy Ghost (verse 24).

The question is, What did these people believe and what happened when they believed? If they believed and received "repentance unto life" as Cornelius did, then all five factors were present. It would be inconsistent to assume otherwise.

**Acts 11:22-24**

*Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted there all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

The church at Jerusalem soon heard what happened in Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch. Immediately they sent a seasoned veteran, Barnabas, to investigate. When he arrived he immediately recognized the presence of the grace of God, and before long many more were added to the Lord.

This is one of the few places in Acts that mention grace in connection with salvation. Although grace is the only factor stated, surely we can assume the other four factors. If not, then we could not assume the presence of

faith or the presence of grace in the many accounts that do not mention either. Moreover, since Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost and faith, he would not have been favorably impressed unless these converts were also.

### Acts 12:23-24

*But the word of God grew and multiplied* (Acts 12:24).

Acts 12:23 records that God struck King Herod with a sickness because of his great pride, and he soon died. Apparently, this divine judgment stirred up many people in Caesarea to the extent that they began to seek God. Whatever the motivation, it is apparent that many new people came into the church around this time, because verse 24 says the Word of God "multiplied."

Once again, we have no description of an actual salvation experience. We can only conclude that the experience of these people corresponded to the detailed accounts that Acts gives elsewhere.

### The Ministries of Peter and Paul

Beginning with Acts 13, the emphasis of the book shifts from the ministry of Peter to that of Paul. Peter's ministry was primarily to the Jews, while Paul's was primarily to the Gentiles. As Paul wrote, "The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)" (Galatians 2:7-8).

The shift in emphasis does not mean that there was a

change in the plan of salvation, as some have taught, for as Paul noted, "the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."

Many years ago there was a minister in Chicago who called himself a hyperdispensationalist and who believed that Peter and Paul preached a different gospel. In his radio ministry he preached that beginning with Acts 13 all miracles, water baptisms, baptisms of the Holy Ghost and speaking with tongues ceased. But this is simply not true, for we find all of these still present in the rest of Acts.

The next chapter will continue to investigate salvation experiences in Acts, focusing on those in the ministry of Paul.

**Notes**

[1]F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, vol. 5 of *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), p. 77.

[2]Ibid., p. 78.

[3]Ibid., pp. 78-79.

[4]Ibid., p. 250.

[5]Ibid., p. 386.

[6]Ibid., p. 181.

[7]A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (New York: Harper and Row, 1930), p. 107.

[8]John Trapp, *Commentary on the New Testament* (1865; rpt. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), p. 438.

[9]Frank Farrell, "Outburst Of Tongues: The New Penetration" *Christianity Today*, September 13, 1963, pp. 3-7.

[10]Charles Conn, *The Glossolalia Phenomenon* (Cleveland, Tenn.: Pathway Press), p. 47.

[11]Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1947), pp. 208-14.

[12]Bruce, p. 190.

# 12

# Salvation Experiences, Acts 13-17

This chapter continues our examination of salvation experiences in the Book of Acts, but with the Apostle Paul in the limelight. One of the important features of Paul's ministry was that he always went to the Jews first, and when they rejected Jesus, he then turned to the Gentiles. He preached the same salvation message to both groups.

**Paul's First Missionary Journey**
**Acts 13:6-12**

*Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord* (Acts 13:12).

The church in Antioch, Syria, contained a number of prophets and teachers. As they were fasting, the Spirit spoke that Barnabas and Saul should begin the work that

God had called them to do. The prophets and teachers laid hands on and prayed over Barnabas and Saul, sending them forth as missionaries.

Leaving Antioch they went to Seleucia, a Mediterranean seacoast city on the Gulf of Issus in Syria. There they boarded a ship for Salamis on the northeast coast of the island of Cyprus. They took John Mark with them on this journey.

There is no mention of any converts in Salamis. They crossed the island to the southwest seacoast city of Paphos, where they encountered a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet named Barjesus. He unscrupulously resisted Paul's message to the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, who listened diligently to the Word of God.

When Christ is preached, there is always opposition, often quite violent. Barjesus attempted to turn the deputy away from faith in Christ. Sensing this opposition, Paul, fixing his eyes on Barjesus, called him a child of the devil and pronounced that the Lord would make him blind. Immediately the sorcerer was blinded.

Sergius Paulus, astonished at what he witnessed and by the doctrine Paul taught, was moved to the point of faith in Christ. The details of what transpired are not stated. Only one factor involved in the salvation experience—faith—is mentioned. Later accounts of salvation under Paul's ministry lead us to assume that if the deputy believed to the point of salvation then he repented, was baptized, and received the Holy Ghost.

**Acts 13:44-52**

*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad,*

*and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed* (Acts 13:48).

Leaving Paphos in Cyprus, Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark boarded a ship and soon arrived in Perga of Pamphylia, a coastal area in Cilicia on the mainland of Asia Minor. (Cilicia can be compared to a state or province, with Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lyconia being like counties.) While the missionaries were at Perga, John Mark decided not to continue any farther and returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas continued north into the interior to Antioch of Pisidia (not the same as Antioch of Syria).

At Antioch Paul and Barnabas spoke in a synagogue for two Sabbaths. On the second Sabbath almost the whole city came to hear them. The Jews were filled with envy when they saw the crowds and began contradicting and blaspheming. Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles and many of them believed to salvation.

Even though Paul and Barnabas were expelled from that area, they left a group of believing, joyful, Holy Ghost-filled saints behind them: "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:52).

Two factors—faith and the filling of the Holy Ghost—are listed in this account, and grace is mentioned in the context (verse 43); we must assume repentance and baptism.

### Acts 14:1

*And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so*

*spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.*

Iconium is another city of Cilicia in an area called Lycaonia. It was but a short distance southeast from Antioch of Pisidia. Here Paul and Barnabas spoke with power. A great multitude believed in Christ, but severe persecution came. God responded with signs and wonders, and His grace was apparent upon both the believers and Paul and Barnabas. Hearing about a plot to stone them, they fled to two neighboring cities in the same area, Lystra and Derbe. As at Antioch, they left a great company of believers behind in Iconium.

As in several other incidents, only one factor is recorded—faith—although verse 3 also refers to grace. It is apparent that these converts believed unto obedience, so we can safely assume that they turned to God in repentance, were baptized, and received the Holy Ghost.

**Acts 14:21**

*And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch* (NKJV).

This account reveals that the missionaries won many converts in Derbe. Nothing is said about any of the factors of salvation in this account. We must assume that the disciples in Derbe became part of the New Testament church just as everyone else did.

After retracing much of their journey to strengthen the new disciples, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch,

Syria, the starting point of this first missionary journey and reported to the church what had happened.

### Paul's Second Missionary Journey
### Acts 16:4-5

*And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*

Because of contention that Paul and Barnabas faced over circumcision of the Gentiles, they journeyed to Jerusalem where the apostles convened the first church council to settle the issue. The apostles and elders decided that Gentile Christians did not need to be circumcised or obey the Jewish law, except for four restrictions. Afterward Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, Syria, and spent a considerable amount of time teaching there.

After some time Paul suggested that they return to the areas where they had preached on their first journey. As they readied themselves, Barnabas proposed they take John Mark along. Paul opposed this plan so vehemently that the two went separate ways. Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and returned to Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, delivering the results of the Jerusalem council. Through their ministry, there was a great increase in the number of believers in this area of Cilicia.

This passage does not mention any factors of salvation. Since the churches "increased," we can only assume

that the salvation experience of the new converts was identical to that of the original believers, and that all the factors of salvation were present.

**Acts 16:14-15**

*And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

After leaving Cilicia, Paul and Silas continued into Galatia and Mysia. Paul wanted to go into Bithynia but was forbidden by the Spirit. While at Troas, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia beckoning them to come over and help. Timothy, who later was to become a very important minister in the church, joined Paul and Silas while they were in Lystra. While they tarried at Troas, Luke, the physician who was to write the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, joined them. From Troas the group took a boat to Neapolis and continued on to Philippi in Macedonia.

In search of a place to worship on the Sabbath, they went out of the city to a riverside where some people customarily had prayer. They spoke the Word of the Lord to several women gathered there. Among them was Lydia, a seller of purple. The Lord opened her heart to the preaching of the gospel.

What did Paul preach to her? Although these women were praying and worshiping God, they did not know about Jesus Christ, water baptism, or the gift of the Holy Ghost. No doubt Paul preached on these topics to Lydia, her household, and the women at the river. Paul's message surely covered the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that the way into Christ was to be baptized into Him. (See Romans 6:1-6; Galatians 3:27.) On the spot (not next Easter or next week) in response to that message, Lydia and her household were baptized. She must have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ because Paul himself was baptized in that name and that is the way he baptized others. In fact, any other way is unknown to the scriptural record!

Baptism is the only factor of salvation this passage mentions. Grace is implied from the work of the Lord in Lydia's heart. Since other similar accounts mention faith, repentance, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, we should assume the presence of these factors also.

Those who insist that baptism is not an essential part of the salvation message and experience will have great difficulty with Acts 16. In both the preceding incident and the one following, Paul and Silas must have included baptism as an essential part of their initial message; otherwise, neither Lydia nor the jailer would have known to attend to this matter at once. From these two incidents, as well as others, it is clear that Paul preached baptism as part of salvation.

### Acts 16:25-34

This passage records the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household. In Philippi Paul and Silas cast an

evil spirit out of a fortuneteller who followed and mocked them. This action created an uproar in the city of Philippi, and Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown in jail. At midnight, while they sang hymns, an earthquake shook the jail so violently that the doors sprang open and their bonds were loosed. When the jailer saw what happened, he supposed the prisoners had escaped. Fearing the repercussion from the city officials when this was discovered, he drew his sword to kill himself. At that moment Paul called out, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here" (Acts 16:28). The jailer then turned to him for help.

*Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house* (Acts 16:29-34).

This account contrasts somewhat to Peter's message at Pentecost. Peter preached about Jesus, His death, burial, resurrection, and exaltation prior to the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" but Paul spoke about these things after first pointing the jailer to Jesus with the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The reason for the

difference is that Peter was addressing a group of religious Jews who already knew something of Jesus Christ and much about biblical concepts and terms.

The jailer, on the other hand, had little or no knowledge of Jesus Christ. One can almost hear him asking, "Who is this Jesus you're talking about? Where did He come from and what does He have to do with salvation? Is He the God you're talking about? I heard others say that the two of you were brought to the jail because you were preaching about Him! What about Him? Tell us more about Him!"

Verse 32 records that Paul and Silas spoke the Word of the Lord to the jailer and his household. At this point and through this means, he learned about grace, faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

He was moved at once to correct his grievous mistake by washing their stripes, and this attitude is indicative of repentance. Moreover he desired and received water baptism immediately, even though it was midnight and undoubtedly Paul and Silas were tired and bruised. Clearly they must have preached the essentiality of repentance and water baptism. Great rejoicing followed in that household, implying that the Spirit was poured out at some time during the night.

Thus faith and water baptism are stated, and repentance and the gift of the Holy Ghost are strongly implied.

### Acts 17:1-4

*Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner*

*was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.*

Paul's party left Philippi and traveled to Thessalonica, a distance of approximately one hundred miles, probably traveling on the Egnatian Way, a well-known military highway that linked the Aegean and Adriatic seas. Thessalonica was the capital city of the province of Macedonia. Situated on the north of the Thermaic Gulf of the Aegean Sea, it was the most important seaport of Macedonia. It had been built on the ancient site of Therma, a city so called because of the hot springs in that area.

A colony of influential Jews had their own synagogue in Thessalonica. Their worship attracted a large number of very devout, God-fearing Greeks. Paul preached Christ in their synagogue and soon gained adherents from among the Jews, the devout Greeks, and the prominent women of Thessalonica. When trouble brewed, Paul was persuaded to leave before riots created an intolerable situation for the new believers. His party left at night and traveled to Berea.

The only factor of salvation mentioned here is faith. However, verse 2 states that Paul preached in the synagogue "as his manner was." It is apparent that Paul had a certain manner of approach to people everywhere. Thus

we can use more detailed accounts about Paul's ministry to supply information omitted from other accounts.

Paul taught the gospel of the grace of God, preaching about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 17:3; 20:24). Knowledge of Christ must come before faith. In fact, faith comes by hearing Christ preached (Romans 10:17).

Although there is no mention of the Holy Ghost in this account, Paul later wrote to these believers, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (I Thessalonians 1:5-6). He also stated that they had received the Holy Spirit (I Thessalonians 4:8; II Thessalonians 2:13).

## Acts 17:10-12

*And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.*

Berea was about fifty miles southwest of Thessalonica at the foot of Mount Bermius. The Jews also had a synagogue there. Paul was soon teaching the message of Jesus

Christ in it. These Jews were somewhat more diligent and careful than those of Thessalonica. They did not accept the word of Paul without question. Having access to the Old Testament Scriptures, they searched them to see whether the things Paul taught about Christ were true or not. Convinced by Paul's speech and spirit as well as their own research, many of them, plus a number of prominent Greek women and men, believed.

Once again only one factor of salvation is mentioned here—faith. But once again we should note that true belief in the Word of God, as these Bereans had, certainly incorporates obedience to the Word. Thus the other factors of salvation are implied by the statement that they believed.

The Thessalonian Jews were determined to put an end to the preaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. They made the fifty-mile journey from their home town in an attempt to stop Paul in his tracks. But they were too late, for Paul had already won many to Christ in Berea. They did stir up an insurrection serious enough for the brethren to send Paul away. Silas and Timothy stayed behind at Berea. Paul boarded a ship and sailed to Athens, the center of Greek culture.

### Acts 17:32-34

*Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them* (Acts 17:34).

Paul arrived at the port at Athens, and as he walked from the port into the city, he saw an altar dedicated to

the unknown God. Later he used this as a basis of a sermon on Mars' Hill.

Paul spent his time in Athens reasoning in the synagogue and marketplaces. His preaching about the resurrection of Jesus caused many Athenians to question his message. Finally they brought him to the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, where the court met to pass judgment on matters pertaining to the welfare of the city.

His message on Mars' Hill is a classic. When he spoke about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his hearers mocked. He left Athens without establishing a church but he did have a few believers.

Again, the only factor mentioned is faith. But as Acts 19 will confirm, Paul expected that a true believer would be baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues.

The next chapter will continue our study of salvation experiences in Paul's ministry, including the account in Acts 19.

# 13

# Salvation Experiences, Acts 18–28

**Acts 18:4-8**

*And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized* (Acts 18:8).

Leaving Athens, Paul traveled forty miles to the west and entered Corinth, the capital city of Achaia, which was a Roman province in Greece. Athens had a reputation for culture, but Corinth for corruption. Corinth was situated on a narrow isthmus of land where an abundance of merchandise moved through it on the trade route between east and west. Every type of vice known to men flowed freely there, making it a hotbed of evil. The people boasted in their luxury and licentiousness.

It was at Corinth that Paul plied his trade of tentmaking, living with Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who had

recently been expelled from Rome by anti-Jewish legislation. Although he was soon driven out of the synagogue, he was able to lead its chief ruler, Crispus, to the Lord. After establishing a church in the home of one Justus, he was able to win a large number of Corinthians to God.

Because of the nature of the people and the culture of the area, the Corinthian church probably caused Paul more headaches and difficulties than any of the others he established. His first epistle to them is one of rebuke and correction. The church was very factious, which characteristic Paul condemned.

Only two factors are mentioned in this account: belief and baptism. However, I Corinthians 12:13 and many other passages in that epistle show that the Corinthian believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Moreover I Corinthians 1:13 shows that they were baptized in Jesus' name. And I Corinthians 14 makes it clear that the church spoke in tongues.

It is interesting to note that Acts says the ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, believed but does not say he was baptized. Since the other Corinthians were baptized, it can be safely assumed that Crispus was too. And I Corinthians 1:14 confirms that he was. This account thus serves as an excellent example of something this book has repeatedly affirmed: when Acts says someone "believed" in the sense of receiving salvation, the word covers total obedience to the gospel, including water baptism.

### Acts 18:24-26

*And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures,*

*came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

When Paul left Corinth, he took Aquila and Priscilla with him and stopped by Ephesus. He spent but a short time there, reasoning in the Jewish synagogue, and then departed for Jerusalem. He left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, and they encountered Apollos in the synagogue. As they listened to him speak, they realized that he had only partial knowledge of the truth, knowing only the baptism of John. Calling him aside, they instructed him more perfectly in the way of the Lord.

This story is most interesting. Preachers who have not fully obeyed the gospel of Christ need to analyze it carefully.

The story also gives us an insight into faith. Apollos believed, but his faith was limited by his lack of knowledge. A person can only testify to or preach what he knows. As someone aptly put it, "You can no more teach what you don't know than you can come back from where you ain't been!" Apollos preached only a coming Christ, not knowing that He had already come, lived, been crucified, been buried, and arisen from the grave.

The Bible does not say what Aquila and Priscilla told him, and does not mention even one factor of salvation. What happened made a great impact upon Apollos, however, for he went to Corinth and publicly persuaded the

Jews that Jesus was the Christ. It seems clear that Aquila and Priscilla rebaptized him in the name of Jesus Christ and prayed for him to receive the Holy Ghost, for Acts 19:1-6 immediately proceeds to tell how Paul did just that for twelve other disciples of John at Ephesus. It is quite possible that these men were followers or associates of Apollos.

The example of Apollos shows that although a person can be both fervent and eloquent, these two admirable qualities do not guarantee that his message is totally true or complete. He may even have a great command of Scripture and not have the correct interpretation or understanding of it! Someone can be in error and yet be sincere in every sense of the word.

Apollos is to be commended for having a teachable spirit, which demonstrates his honesty and sincerity. Aquila and Priscilla must be commended for approaching and instructing him in humility.

Would Apollos have been saved if he had not encountered Aquila and Priscilla and heard the truth? Apparently not. But if someone is absolutely sincere and honest in their pursuit of God, He will see to it that an Aquila, a Priscilla, or a Paul crosses his pathway. The big question then is, Will that person be humble enough to admit his lack and submit to instruction by someone who may not even be in the same social class as he? Often this is not easy to do!

Following the story of Apollos is a very similar occurrence. The first incident involved a preacher; the second involved a group of believers. Both were limited in faith because of a lack of knowledge.

No person reading these accounts should take them lightly. God wants everyone to be saved and to come to

the knowledge of the truth. Paul may have thought of these two incidents when he wrote, "[God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (I Timothy 2:4-7).

The word *verity* comes from a Greek word meaning "true (as not concealing)." In other words, Paul taught people in faith and truth, concealing nothing that would hinder their completeness in Christ. That is why he felt it necessary to rebaptize the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19.

## Paul's Third Missionary Journey
## Acts 19:1-7

*And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues,*

*and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.*

Paul spent a short time in Ephesus on his first stay but then headed for Jerusalem, apparently for the Jewish passover. The men in the synagogue at Ephesus urged him to stay longer, but he declined. After visiting the church in Jerusalem, he returned to Antioch and spent some time there.

Departing from Antioch on his third missionary journey, Paul traveled throughout Galatia and Phrygia, visiting the established churches in order to strengthen them. After a long journey he arrived in Ephesus, where he found some disciples of John. It appears that they were Gentiles, for they were unknown to Paul from his previous ministry in the Jewish synagogue there, where Aquila and Priscilla had witnessed to Apollos.

Ephesus was at that time the greatest commercial city of Asia Minor, having a harbor connected to the Aegean Sea by the Cayster River. It was on the main route from Rome to the east, and it enjoyed significant political prominence. A free Greek city, it had its own senate and civic assembly. Its temple of the goddess Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. A large colony of Jews lived there.

The group of believers Paul found did not have full knowledge of the truth and were therefore deficient in their faith. They could have been disciples of Apollos who heard him before he encountered Aquila and Priscilla, or someone else may have picked up the message of Apollos and spread it in the city. In any case, these men did not know about Jesus Christ and thus were not true believers.

This is a very important account of salvation in the

Book of Acts, for it gives great insight into the emphasis of Paul's ministry. It is one of the most detailed accounts we have, and God inspired it to give us a divine pattern to go by. It would correct much theology today if accepted and practiced.

Let us take a close look at this account and analyze Paul's ministry to these Gentiles.

1. Paul expected everyone to receive the Holy Ghost upon believing. That expectation is implied very clearly in the question he asked: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2, NKJV).

2. Paul's question implies that a person will definitely know when he receives the Holy Ghost. There will be no doubt about it (verse 2).

3. The Ephesian disciples had not received because their faith was incomplete.

4. Their faith was incomplete because of a lack of knowledge.

5. Paul asked questions to ferret out the difficulty. When he discovered it, he knew what to do.

6. He corrected their faulty faith by providing the missing information. Verse 4 is surely a summary version of what Paul actually said. No doubt he explained Christ's virgin birth, life, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. His message was thorough enough that these Ephesians grasped the truth and believed it to the point of obedience.

7. He pressed for action immediately, taking the necessary action to get them to a place where they could be baptized.

8. He rebaptized them since they had not been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. The only difference

between John's baptism and Paul's baptism was the name of Jesus, and this difference was significant enough for Paul to rebaptize these men. Thus if a person has not been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, he should be rebaptized. Paul set a precedent when he rebaptized these twelve men. What greater authority do we need?

9. He prayed for them to receive the Holy Ghost after giving proper instructions. When they received the Holy Ghost they spake with tongues.

This account gives every minister a pattern to follow in bringing people to proper faith in Christ:

1. He must determine where they are spiritually.

2. He must provide the missing information so that they can receive salvation. They must understand who Jesus is and what He did for them by His death, burial, and resurrection.

3. He must baptize them in the name of Jesus Christ if they have not been baptized in His name.

4. He must pray for them to receive the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues.

When someone studies Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, he must keep this account of the beginning of their salvation in mind. Any interpretation of Ephesians that contradicts Acts 19 and what it teaches has to be incorrect!

Acts 19 mentions all the factors except grace and repentance. But it was by God's grace that Paul was directed to go to Ephesus and find these disciples, and the Book of Ephesians emphasizes grace as the source of salvation. Their willingness to respond immediately to his instructions indicates repentance.

We must not minimize this important account in the

Scriptures that substantiates God's plan of salvation. These twelve men did not have the fulness of truth. Paul was not content to leave them with their incomplete experience, but he brought them up to God's standard of salvation, just as Aquila and Priscilla did for Apollos. He could do no less if he was to remain faithful to God's message and be "a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (I Timothy 2:7).

This divinely inspired account of Paul's ministry at Ephesus is very significant today. Many people claim that the Pauline epistles differ from the original plan of salvation as spoken by Peter, saying that baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and receiving the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues are unessential. Some even call this message a false doctrine and call those who believe it a cult. But this account makes their accusations false and refutes their contention. The message of salvation that Paul preached was identical to Peter's instructions in Acts 2:38.

## Acts 19:18

*And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.*

After the events of Acts 19:1-6, Paul remained in Ephesus for two years. He taught in the synagogue (evidently the one mentioned in Acts 18:19) for three months. Because many Jews rejected him, he departed from the synagogue and conducted daily discussions in the school of Tyrannus.

Acts 19:18 records two salvation factors: belief and confession of wrong deeds, which implies repentance. Of

course, since Paul commanded the twelve believers at Ephesus to be baptized in Jesus' name and receive the Holy Ghost, we know that he preached the same message to the other Ephesians.

**Acts 28:17-24**

*And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not* (Acts 28:23-24).

Much transpired between Acts 19 and Acts 28. Although Paul preached in many places, there is no record of salvation until this one in Acts 28. After leaving Ephesus he journeyed to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth; then back to Berea, Thessalonica, Philippi, Neapolis, Troas, Miletus, Rhodes, Tyre, and Caesarea; and then on to Jerusalem. While he was at Jerusalem he was persuaded to take a vow of purification in the Temple, which lasted seven days. As this vow was ending, certain Jews, seeing him in the Temple and supposing he had polluted it, caused a riot that almost ended in his death. Roman soldiers took custody of him for his own protection. The Jewish religious leaders brought false charges against him, and after appearing before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa, he eventually appealed to Caesar. In the ensuing journey to Rome he survived a shipwreck and was miraculously saved from a viper's bite.

When Paul finally arrived in Rome as a prisoner, he was given the freedom to call the leaders of the Jews together. He told them about his arrest and appeal and then began to tell them about Jesus. As a result, a number of Jews believed his message. Presumably some believed unto salvation.

This is the last account of salvation recorded in Acts, although there were surely many more that were not recorded. For example, Acts 28:30-31 tells us that Paul preached for two more years in his own house, and undoubtedly his preaching here produced results, as at other places, although none are mentioned.

Only one factor of salvation is mentioned in this account, but Acts 19:1-6 shows that Paul brought all who truly believed to the point of water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

## Conclusion

Our study of the thirty-one salvation experiences recorded in the Book of Acts reveals the following:

1. Grace is mentioned in the context of four accounts.

2. Faith or belief is mentioned in twenty accounts.

3. Repentance is mentioned twice. In addition, turning to the Lord is mentioned twice and confession of sins once.

4. Baptism is mentioned in nine accounts. The name involved at baptism is recorded five times, and each time it is described as the name of the Lord Jesus, the name of Jesus Christ, or the name of the Lord. Never is the phrase "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" used.

5. Receiving the Holy Ghost is stated in five accounts. Speaking in tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy

Ghost is expressly stated three of those times and indicated in the other two. In addition, the presence of the Holy Ghost is mentioned in the contexts of five other accounts, rejoicing (apparently caused by the Holy Ghost) is in two more, and the corresponding epistles in two other cases show that the converts received the Holy Ghost.

6. In seven incidents, no factors are mentioned, and in thirteen only one is.

7. In many accounts, factors that are not expressly named are implied by the words or events.

8. We can safely assume that all five factors—grace, faith, repentance, water baptism in Jesus' name, and the gift of the Holy Ghost with tongues—were present whenever someone was born again.

Paul and Peter preached the same message of salvation. Salvation does not consist of many ways to God, but of one way through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6). A person is drawn to God through His grace; in response, he believes in the incarnation, sinless life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. This faith leads to repentance, which is a genuine turning away from sin and to Christ; then to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission or washing away of sins; and finally to receiving the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues, which God has promised to every believer. This is the record of the Book of Acts. Who would dare change it?

The Book of Acts certainly does not record everything that occurred during the years that it covers. It records enough, however, to let the reader know that the experience of salvation was consistent, without variation. It fol-

lowed a pattern, even though the people to whom it was preached were as different as the east is from the west. If Acts says anything it says that God has but one plan of salvation, does not deviate from it, and is very consistent in His plan.

As F. F. Bruce stated in *The Book of the Acts*, page 34, "'The things concerning the kingdom of God' at the beginning of Acts (1:3) are identical with 'the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ' at the end of the book (28:31)."

Having completed our study of salvation experiences in Acts, let us now examine passages in the Epistles that some people think contradict the record of salvation in Acts.

# Part Two

# 14

# The Epistles and Acts

The Epistles and Acts do not contradict each other! Both are equally God's Word and equally true. Nothing in the Epistles deletes, alters, or modifies the experiences recorded in Acts. When we study the Epistles, we must harmonize all passages relating to salvation with the Book of Acts, for the churches to whom the Epistles were originally addressed were established in the Book of Acts.

Any interpretation of the Epistles that does not harmonize with the record in Acts is an errant interpretation. Paul's explanations in his epistles harmonize with his actions and proclamations in Acts. There is no conflict.

There is only one way to be saved. Jew and Gentile alike enter the church on the same basis—through the same door. Jesus said He was the one door into the sheepfold. There is one door and one sheepfold. Peter and Paul preached the same gospel.

The Bible describes the one gospel in several different ways:

the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24)
the gospel of God (Romans 1:1)
the gospel of his Son (Romans 1:9)
the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16)
the gospel of peace (Romans 10:15)
Christ's gospel (II Corinthians 2:12)
the glorious gospel of Christ (II Corinthians 4:4)
the gospel of the uncircumcision (Galatians 2:7)
the gospel of the circumcision (Galatians 2:7)
the gospel of your salvation (Ephesians 1:13)
the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 1:8)
our gospel (II Thessalonians 2:14)
the glorious gospel of the blessed God (I Timothy 1:11)
my gospel (II Timothy 2:8)
the everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6)

The Apostle Paul specifically defined the gospel in I Corinthians 15:1-4 as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the gospel by which both Peter and Paul were saved, as well as every other New Testament believer.

Paul left a very sober warning relative to that gospel in Galatians 1:6-12, which says that anyone who preaches any other gospel is accursed.

Paul knew but one gospel. He acknowledged no other. If what he taught in the Epistles was different from what he taught the Ephesians in Acts 19:1-6, then he became a victim of his own pronounced curse! But he did not. If there seems to be a change, it is due to a misinterpretation of what he wrote.

This chapter and the two following will analyze, compare, and explain some passages in the Epistles that some people feel differ or conflict with the experiences in Acts. If there seems to be a conflict or difference, it must be reconciled and it can be.

### Ephesians 2:7-10

*That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

This passage is frequently quoted to prove that salvation is without any qualifying or restrictive factors such as are contained in Acts 2:38, that is, repentance and baptism. One writer became so bold as to write, "Grace plus zero equals salvation," indicating that grace is the only factor in salvation. But is that true?

God is the source of all things. He initiated creation and salvation. Both result from His bountiful love and mercy; humans had nothing to do with providing either. That is grace. But if grace is the only factor in salvation, then all people are automatically saved—regardless of how they respond to God or conduct their lives. The Bible teaches that not everyone will be saved, however. God demands a response to His grace and that response is with all of its implications.

God made His greatest overture toward humanity when He came in the flesh, as the Son of God, a perfect man. As such He offered Himself as the supreme sacrifice on the cross for our sins. (See Hebrews 9:14; Titus 2:13-14.) We had nothing to do with that overture. We did not ask for it or deserve it! The initiative was strictly and wholly God's. That is the essence of grace!

In John 3:16, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son [grace], that whosoever believeth in him [response] should not perish, but have everlasting life [result]." The two words *loved* and *gave* express the profundity of God's grace. "Believing" incorporates (1) acceptance of His unique birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection; (2) application of that work to our lives by repentance, water baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost; and (3) doing the good works that God has ordained we should.

Ephesians 2:8 does not nullify, alter, or modify Acts 2:38 but rather embraces repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost in the word *faith*. This is illustrated by Acts 2:41: "Then they that gladly received his word [faith] were baptized [action caused by faith]: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls [result]."

Genuine faith moves a person to action! If faith is passive, it is sterile and unproductive. Faith without an obedient response is really not faith at all.

The story is told of a man who walked a tightrope over Niagara Falls. On his return trip he rolled a wheelbarrow back on the wire. Scanning the enthusiastic, applauding crowd, he inquired, "Is there anyone here who believes I can wheel a man over these falls in this wheel-

barrow?" A man in the crowd jumped to his feet and waved his hand vigorously. Seeing the waving hand, the acrobat called out cheerfully, "O.K., sir, step up here and I'll wheel you to the other side!" "No sir," the man replied emphatically. "You'll never get me in there!" "Why not? I thought you said you believed?" "Well, I believe all right, but not to that extent!" he replied, greatly relieved that he could refuse. Evidently he did not believe as much as he thought he did.

Faith is much more than mental assent. It is complete trust, without doubt or question, which moves a person to obedience. Abraham's faith is a good example: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8).

Almost every "by faith" in Hebrews 11 is followed by an active verb that denotes concurrent action. By faith the people of God were moved, offered, obeyed, sojourned, blessed, commanded, hid, refused, forsook, passed through, fell down, subdued, wrought, obtained, stopped, quenched, escaped, waxed valiant, were tortured, were stoned, were sawn asunder, and wandered. Faith is only genuine when coupled with action, or obedient response.

The born-again person is the workmanship of God, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." God "creates" the Christian through the new birth, as Jesus explained to Nicodemus:

*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born*

*of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit* (John 3:3, 5, 8).

The kingdom and the new birth that Jesus spoke about were so far removed from Nicodemus's mind that he did not understand. The average Hebrew thought only of the earthly Jewish kingdom and longed to see it restored. Many of them saw Jesus as the restorer of that kingdom. Their natural minds could not comprehend the things of the Spirit. As I Corinthians 2:12-14 explains, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Even Jesus' own disciples did not fully comprehend His plan before they received the Holy Ghost. On the day that He ascended into heaven they asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

Their interest was the restoration of Israel. They had little concept of what was about to happen to them since it had never occurred before. They did not know what the baptism of the Holy Ghost would be like. Neither did they fully understand the plan of the New Testament church.

Jesus knew what He was doing, however; His instructions initiated the church and brought it into reality. It was a mystery to the early disciples, but not to Jesus. The church began on the Day of Pentecost, and the newly Spirit-filled believers began to fulfill God's plan. They gradually realized that God wanted to unite both Jews and Gentiles into one spiritual body.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians describes the church, particularly (1) the concept of the church, (2) the composition of the church, and (3) the conduct of the church.

### The Concept of the Church

The church was conceived in eternity past, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It was to consist of a people who were holy and without blame before Him in love. It was foreordained by God and would be established when the fulness of time came. It would be established by redemption through Christ's shed blood, through which people would receive forgiveness of sins. A person becomes part of the church of Jesus Christ when he is baptized into Him and receives His Spirit, which seals him until the day of redemption. (See Ephesians 1:1-14; Galatians 4:4-6.)

### The Composition of the Church

Then the fulness of time came, and God sent forth His Son, made of a woman and made under the law (Galatians 4:4). The redemption Christ wrought through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension brought the church into existence. It was established on the Day of Pentecost. In its beginning it consisted of all Jews. A little later, however, God brought the Gentiles into it also.

Ephesians 1:12-14 describes how this happened: "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye [Ephesian Gentiles] also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

In verse 12, Paul spoke of those who first trusted in Christ, namely, the believers at Pentecost and shortly thereafter, all of whom were Jews. In verse 13, Paul wrote of Gentiles also being in the church of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2 explains how God took the Gentiles, who were afar off, without hope, strangers from the covenants of promise, and without God in the world, and through the blood of Christ, brought them into a position where they too became a habitation of God through the Spirit. Acts 19:1-6 details how God actually brought these Ephesian Gentiles into the church. Thus the words of Acts 2:39 were fulfilled: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Ephesians 3 describes how the two groups, Jews and Gentiles, blend together into one composite body with no difference between them.

### The Conduct of the Church

Ephesians 4-6 provides an overview of how the believer is to conduct himself before God and his fellowman. God expects something of every believer. Ephesians 5:3-17 outlines conduct that is unacceptable to God and that will cause Him to reject those who indulge in it. God

will not excuse nor overlook such conduct in Christians. Since His church is made up of born-again people, there are certain characteristics and attributes that God wants us to put on or acquire, which Ephesians 4:24-5:2 discusses. Ephesians 5:18-21 further outlines the life of Christian victory. Then Ephesians 5:22-23 compares the marriage relationship to that of Jesus and the church, teaching the conduct of the partners toward each other. That relationship is to be cemented by a love like that of Christ for His church.

Finally, Ephesians 6 delineates the Christian's conduct toward the family so that he will know what is acceptable to the Lord. Further, it urges the Christian to put on God's armor so that he may withstand the evil that is sure to come against every true believer. Prayer is a very important part of that armor.

**Born Again**

The caterpillar, a crawling, wiggling, ugly, earthbound worm, spins a cocoon around itself and becomes a chrysalis. What takes place during this time is called metamorphosis—a transformation from an ugly worm into a beautiful, multicolored butterfly, capable of soaring to great heights which that poor, grovelling worm could never have imagined.

Similarly, a change takes place when God renovates an earthbound, lost soul and brings him into the new world of His kingdom. The natural man could never dream of the transformation that takes place when Jesus Christ inhabits his life! Every aspect of his life goes through a drastic, God-ordained metamorphosis!

Paul's epistles beautifully describe this new birth:

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:26-27). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Christ's teaching of the birth of water and Spirit is implemented throughout the Book of Acts. Peter explained the new birth on the Day of Pentecost when he replied to the question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" by saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins [born of water], and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [born of the Spirit]. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:37-39).

The converts were born of water and Spirit at Pentecost; they were also born of water and Spirit in Samaria (Acts 8:12-17), in Damascus (Acts 9:17-18), in Caesarea (Acts 10:44-48) and in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6).

There is no record in the New Testament that this experience was deleted, altered, or modified in any manner. If the promise of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost was for everyone who was afar off at the beginning of the church age, then it is still applicable today. Who would be so bold as to say that God changed His plan? Who would dare change, alter, or modify it without proper authorization from heaven? This new-birth experience is the result of God's saving grace, and faith appropriates it to our lives! It leaves no basis for boasting or

trusting in our works. The entire plan of salvation is a gift of the grace of God!

Many people today insist that the works Paul wrote about in Ephesians 2:9—"not of works, lest any man should boast"—include water baptism. Thus they declare baptism to be a work of the flesh that someone could boast about. But baptism is an act of faith; it is simply obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His apostles (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It is for the remission of sin, which only God, not humans, can grant. Paul certainly preached water baptism as part of salvation; otherwise, neither the Philippian jailer and family, nor Lydia, nor the Ephesians in Acts 19 would have known to be baptized. Would anyone be so bold as to suggest that this command has been deleted, altered, or modified?

Although many people have tried to reduce the new birth to any type of religious experience, real or imagined, it still remains, as Jesus declared it, a birth of water and Spirit. Jesus told us how to recognize the birth of the Spirit. He said it would be like the wind blowing: we do not know where the wind comes from or where it is going, but we can hear the sound. What sound did those at Pentecost hear when the Spirit came on them? They heard speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. After describing the sound of the wind, Jesus said, "So is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). There is a uniform witness to every born-again believer! Thus our salvation experience should be the same as that proclaimed by the apostles and recorded consistently in the Book of Acts.

The Epistles do not contradict the record of Acts; rather, they confirm its message.

# 15

# Salvation in Romans

Romans is Paul's most comprehensive statement of theology. It describes the plan of salvation, giving attention to each factor. First of all, let us look at the general, overall design of this epistle.

1. Introduction 1:1-17
2. The Plight of Degenerate Mankind 1:18-3:20
3. Justification by Faith 3:21-5:21
4. Sanctification by the Spirit 6:1-8:39 and 12:1-21
5. Interlude: Israel's past, present, future 9:1-11:36
6. Practical Aspects of Christian Life 13:1-16:27

The church at Rome to whom Paul addressed this epistle apparently began as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, for Acts 2:10 lists "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes" as being in attendance that day.

Paul wrote this doctrinal letter to the Roman church, pointing out some of the most important factors relative

to their life in Christ, both in its beginning and in its continuance. All phases of the Christian life are important, and the Christian needs to understand them, both for personal growth and also to communicate Christianity to others correctly.

The letter was written at Corinth, dictated by Paul to Tertius, and apparently delivered to Rome by Phoebe, a Greek Christian woman who was on her way to that city.

Paul had spent a considerable amount of time with Aquila and Priscilla, who had been driven from Rome by an edict of the emperor forcing all Jews to depart that city. Much of Paul's knowledge of the church at Rome and the conditions surrounding it probably came from them.

At the time he dictated his letter, the edict at Rome had been lifted and his two companions had returned home. It is possible Paul had received letters from them describing the need for a thorough explanation of the gospel to ward off possible attacks by enemies of the gospel.

Romans 1-2 describes the degeneration of humanity from Eden on, which the Old Testament depicts in detail. The general sinfulness of mankind was evident in Noah's time, when only eight souls survived God's judgment of the flood, and again at the tower of Babel, where God's judgment confused the languages and scattered people throughout the earth.

Sin loomed up glaringly in the Israelites as they struggled to maintain their integrity with God. Their battle centered around the flesh with its natural inclination to complain, grumble, and disobey. The rituals of the law did not give them strength to cope with those fleshly tendencies. They continually trespassed against the law. Judgment

against them was a constant reminder of their frailty and disobedience to God. Their most serious sin was rejecting Jesus Christ as Messiah, King, and Lord.

The Gentiles found themselves in a similar position. They were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and were without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).

Thus both Jews and Gentiles were estranged from God when Jesus came. In the fulness of time, God intervened by His grace and Christ came. Romans 3 explains that Calvary enabled God to reconcile His creation to Himself. By accepting Christ's sacrifice, a person can be counted as righteous by God. He turns to God from sin by repentance, is separated from sin by baptism into the name of Jesus Christ, and receives the Holy Ghost, who imparts new life (Romans 5:5; 6:3-4).

Nothing in Romans conflicts with Acts 2:38. Romans explains the plan of salvation in beautiful detail. Its purpose is not to tell Christians how to be born again but to explain the basis and significance of what has already happened to them.

The reason for repentance (turning from sin to God) is quite apparent from Romans 3: "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. . . . Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his

sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10-12, 19-20, 23).

Those at Pentecost were pricked in their hearts when they heard Peter lay the crucifixion of Christ at their door. They felt the condemnation that Romans 3 describes. Their guilt led them to cry out, "What shall we do?" Their sin convicted them to the extent that they realized their desperate need of help. Peter's answer provided that help, as it pointed them to Christ. Romans 3:21-22 explains that a person must turn to Christ through faith as the only way for justification. We have nothing else to plead but His death, burial, and resurrection; He is our only hope.

Peter commanded baptism on the Day of Pentecost; Paul explained its place in the plan of salvation in Romans 6:3-4. A person who recognizes his separation from God because of sin, with the subsequent threat of eternal separation forever from Him, and who turns with all of his heart from sin and to God must be "buried with him by baptism into death." Then just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so he also should walk in newness of life. With the record of sin now cleared, he must yield himself to God and receive the Holy Ghost.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is what sets people free from sin and death (Romans 8:2). Romans 8:1-16 explains the place of the Spirit in the life of the believer. According to verses 11 and 13 the Spirit makes us alive unto God and is the only means of killing off the deeds of the body, which guarantees the continuance of our life in God.

**Romans 10:4, 6-10**

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. . . . But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

These last two verses of Scripture are quoted often as though they gave a complete description of the salvation experience, separate and apart from the Book of Acts. We must remember, however, that Romans 9, 10, and 11 were written about the Jews coming to salvation. There was much about Jesus Christ that they did not believe. Before they could be saved, they had to arrive at the same place that Paul himself did—a recognition of Jesus Christ as their Savior and God. The first step in anyone's salvation is to believe what the Scriptures declare about Jesus Christ. This includes the prophecies in the Old Testament and His incarnation, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. That faith must spring from the heart, not just the head! It must be articulated in both word and action.

Paul did not have something different in mind in Romans 10:9-10 from what he himself experienced and preached. (See Acts 9:17-18; 16:14-15, 30-34; 18:8; 19:1-6; 22:16.) Paul did not mean merely to articulate the words "I believe that Jesus Christ is my Savior" or that this statement makes one a child of God, saved and ready for the rapture.

In my own life, I have never known a time when I did not believe in Jesus Christ, but I had no assurance of salvation in my heart before I surrendered my life to Him and experienced what the early church did. To ignore the experiences in the Book of Acts and make something out of this statement in Romans that Paul never intended is a gross error of interpretation and could violate Galatians 1:8-9.

What then does Romans 10:9-10 mean? Paul discussed the plight of unbelieving Israel in Romans 9-11. He yearned for the day that they would be saved. Somehow, he said, the knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Messiah had eluded them. Their confidence was in the law that was at their fingertips, and it seemed much more substantial than faith. Their zeal was great, but it was misguided for lack of knowledge (Romans 10:2). They had difficulty in relying on God's grace for salvation by faith rather than on their works and rituals. They stumbled over the stumbling stone of faith in Christ (Romans 9:31-33).

Paul argued that unbelieving Israel need not concern themselves in trying to call Christ down from heaven or bring Him up from the dead—all they really needed to do was believe (be convinced of the veracity of) His death, burial, and resurrection in their hearts and act on it.

Anyone who really calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:11-13).

Paul realized that the prophecies of both Moses and Isaiah were being fulfilled by these unbelieving Jews. He recognized Israel's blindness (Romans 11:7), and he attributed it to unbelief (Romans 11:20).

Paul foresaw that Israel's blindness was temporary and that one day they would come to faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 11:25-27). He saw both Jews and Gentiles saved by the same God and through the same means: "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith" (Romans 3:29-30). "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:12-13).

The pieces of the mystery begin to fall into place. Israel is blinded temporarily while Gentiles are brought to faith in Christ. But Israel will not always remain in a state of blindness and unbelief. The day will come when the scales will fall from their eyes as they did from Paul's when he was baptized, calling on the name of the Lord, and was filled with the Holy Ghost. This conversion of Israel will fulfill Ezekiel 36:25-27 in which God promised to give them a new spirit.

The beginning of Paul's faith was the traumatic moment when the blinding light knocked him to the ground. His faith leaped into action when he learned who was behind the blinding light!

"Who art thou, Lord?" he cried out in his confusion.

The reply came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." (See Acts 9:5.)

Paul was so astonished that he literally trembled all over. By no stretch of his imagination had he anticipated that answer! "Jesus, whom I am persecuting, is the Lord? he must have mused to himself."

Suddenly it dawned on him that the One he had been persecuting was the same One that he worshiped as God! Not for one moment had he associated Jesus Christ with the God of his fathers! He thought Jesus was an impostor! Overcome with remorse and shame at his ignorance, and in a penitent mood, he cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

Three days later Paul's faith blossomed into fulness when he heard the words of salvation from the lips of Ananias and took immediate action. The same name he went to Damascus to persecute, he took on in baptism. He was baptized in Jesus' name for the washing away of his sins and was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17-18; 22:16).

Paul's Damascus-road experience could be an indication of what will happen when Israel as a whole comes to faith in Christ. In three days he was completely transformed, worshiping the One he had previously persecuted in ignorance. (See I Timothy 1:12-16.) He knew what he had experienced when he came to faith in Jesus, and he certainly would not have proposed some other way for his fellow Jews to be saved, as many today would try to make us believe.

No, Romans 10:9-10 does not alter or modify the experiences of the Book of Acts. Rather, it explains the only means of receiving the new birth described in Acts: genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

# 16

# Salvation in Titus

Titus is a Pauline ministerial epistle. Titus was a bishop over the island of Crete, where Paul preached in his early ministry. Evidently he was saved under Paul's ministry. Paul wrote this letter while imprisoned in Rome.

The Book of Titus gives some excellent advice relative to a minister's life and conduct both as a Christian and a minister. Titus 2-3 discusses salvation, so let us consider those passages carefully.

**Titus 2:11-15**

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave*

*himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

This portion of Scripture discusses some of the factors involved in salvation. First it mentions the grace of God that makes salvation both possible and available. The next chapter sheds further light upon grace, explaining that it embraces God's kindness, love, and mercy. Grace consists of these attributes of God manifested to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. We should notice that grace has appeared to all humanity, not just a select few.

Grace has a teaching ministry. It teaches that we must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, which implies repentance. It also teaches that we must live sober, righteous, and godly lives. The idea that a person can be saved and still indulge in unrighteous, ungodly, worldly pleasures and actions is a myth instigated by Satan. To deny these things means to stop participating in them. Repentance means not only being sorry for sin but also turning away from it and turning to God.

The true Christian lives with his eyes focused on Jesus Christ and His second coming, for He is our Savior and our great God. This statement signifies that we must believe in Jesus as Savior, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; as mediator, the daysman who lays His hands on both God and man; and as God Himself, the One in full possession of deity. (See Job 9:32-33; John 14:9; 20:28; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:19; 2:9-10; I Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 1:19-20.)

Colossians 2:9-10 states, "For in him dwelleth all the

fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." This passage reveals the pre-eminence and incomparable magnificence of Jesus Christ. He was, is, and ever shall be! (See Isaiah 9:6-7; Revelation 1:7-8.)

**Titus 3:3-7**

*For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

These five verses vividly set forth Paul's teaching on salvation. The following elements are prominent in this passage:

1. The degenerate condition of mankind
2. The grace of God through Jesus Christ (Salvation not by good works of humans, but according to God's mercy)
3. The washing of regeneration
4. The renewing of the Holy Ghost

The *regeneration* in verse 5 occurs but twice in the New Testament. It comes from a Greek word that suggests a spiritual rebirth, which includes a cleansing of

sins and a renovation of carnal desires. "The washing of regeneration" coincides with Acts 2:38, where Peter commanded repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. It agrees with Christ's statement to Nicodemus that everyone needs to be born of water (John 3:5). The washing of regeneration prepares the old man for the new life that flows from Jesus Christ.

The "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is the birth of the Spirit of John 3:5, the gift of the Holy Ghost of Acts 2:38. Romans 6:4 calls it "newness of life." In Romans 8:2 it is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 1:13 describes it as being "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." This is the experience promised by Jesus: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive)" (John 7:38-39). "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5).

According to Titus 3:5, then, we are saved through the mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. In other words, God's saving mercy provides the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; we are not saved without the washing and the renewing. Salvation includes all three elements.

According to Titus 3:7, we are justified by God's grace, which simply means that the goodness of God manifested to this world by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His subsequent death on Calvary thrust us undeserving humans into a position of access to God. Before, we were aliens—without hope, without God, and

with no right even to approach Him—but now because of Calvary we have a perfect right to come to the throne of grace, ask for forgiveness, and experience peace with God (Romans 5:1-2). This occurs through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, purchased for us by the blood of Christ. Thus we have become heirs of eternal life.

We conclude that nothing in Titus contradicts the record of Acts. To the contrary, Paul's description of salvation in Titus confirms the teaching of Acts.

# 17

# Conclusion

When God instituted the church, He initiated certain things that have never been cancelled, altered, modified, or changed.

God ordained the Cross, long before the foundation of the world. He foresaw the tomb and resurrection morning. Pentecost, too, was prearranged! These things were predetermined in the economy of God.

The Cross was foreshadowed in the slaying of the Passover lamb in Egypt. The tomb was foreshadowed in the crossing of the Red Sea. The outpouring of the Holy Ghost was foreshadowed at Mount Sinai when God gave the law to His people. God equipped His people with everything they needed to enter the Promised Land. Had they not been dissuaded by the ten spies' evil report, they would have conquered it easily.

These typological events point to the message of the Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost when he answered

the queries of the crowd. He proclaimed the way of salvation: repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

Repentance is a turning away from sin, typified by leaving the bondage of Egypt. It includes calling out to God for forgiveness and beginnning a life of obedience.

Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is for the remission of sins. It is a severing from the old life of sin, as typified by Israel's crossing of the Red Sea.

Receiving the Holy Ghost, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:2), is necessary to lead us to our ultimate land of promise—heaven!

We have very carefully threaded our way through the Book of Acts, searching out every salvation experience. The composite of these accounts shows that all the factors given in Acts 2:38 occurred throughout the days of the early church.

In addition, we analyzed four of the most often quoted references of salvation in the Epistles and discovered that each harmonizes with the Book of Acts.

God planned the New Testament church from eternity past, and in His dealing with humanity, He has not altered His eternal plan. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Psalm 89:34).

The church is God's pearl of great price. He bought the whole field (world) just to get the hidden treasure (the church). (See Matthew 13:44-46.) This pearl is a body of born-again people, new creatures in Christ Jesus, who are saved by grace through faith. They have had their hearts cleansed by the blood of the Lamb through repentance

from sin and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. They have been baptized into Him (Galatians 3:27). True to His promise, He has given those repented, yielded vessels the gift of the Holy Ghost, enabling them to fulfill His plan. Both Jews and Gentiles are baptized into one body by the Holy Spirit and partake of that Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13).

The Apostle Paul called the church a great mystery: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Ephesians 3:5-6); "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:25-27).

Just prior to the Cross Jesus told His disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:15-18).

When someone receives the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, it is Jesus Christ returning to the believer in the Spirit. He takes up residence in the

believer's heart. The mystery is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This fulfills God's eternal purpose!

God's purpose for His church has never changed. To be in it, a person must be transformed by the grace of God through faith, by repenting, being baptized in His name, and receiving His Spirit. Thus he becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus and is able to do God's will (II Corinthians 5:17).

God still deals with people today on the same basis as when He established the church. Satan has interfered, however, as he did in the Garden of Eden, trying to change, alter, and modify God's plan for this age. From the Garden of Eden on, Satan's primary weapon to defeat God's purpose was and is to question the validity of His Word. He did this to Adam and Eve by inserting the one word *not*, and he has been using the same factor ever since. (See Genesis 3:4.)

But everyone deserves the opportunity to know that God has not changed, altered, or modified His plan! He saves people by the same experience as at the beginning of the church age.

When God gave Moses the plans for the Tabernacle and its furnishings He said, "Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40). (See also Numbers 8:4; Hebrews 8:5.) The reason this pattern could not be changed was that it is a pattern of things in heaven (Hebrews 9:23-24).

God's precise plan was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when 120 were filled with the Holy Ghost, followed by 3000. How could anyone declare the events of that day invalid or unessential for the church age? God's pattern has not changed; it is still the same!

Millions today believe and practice the faith of the apostles as recorded in the Book of Acts. Those who have not yet received the biblical salvation experience should search out the plan of God for the church age, believe it, obey it, follow it, and be saved.

ADDENDUM 1

# Acts is Important

WITHOUT ACTS WE WOULD HAVE:
No record of the church's beginning
No record of water baptisms
No record of the use of the name of Jesus in baptism
No record of Jesus' directive in Acts 1:8
No record of waiting ten days by the 120 for Holy Ghost
No record of the forty days after resurrection
No record of Jesus' ascension
No record of the prediction by angels of Jesus' return
No record of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost
No record of speaking in tongues when receiving the Holy Ghost
No record of others receiving the Holy Ghost
No record of the Samaritan's conversion
No record of Saul's conversion
No record of the angel's message to Cornelius in Acts 10
No record of Peter's housetop prayer
No record of Gentile's conversion
No record of Paul's travels as a missionary
No record of the numbers who came to Christ during Acts' period
No record of the many miracles wrought by the Apostles
No record of local church beginnings

No record of Apollos' enlightenment of the truth
No record of other incidents of salvation (31 in all)
No record of the deacons, Stephen and Philip
No record of the first martyr, Stephen
No record of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion
No record of Lydia's the seller of purple, conversion
No record of the Philippian jailer and his conversion
No record of Ananias and Sapphira's treachery leading to death
No record of raising Dorcas from death
No record of the first church council
No record of persecutions against the church
No record of the beginning of church organization
No record of severe opposition against the church
No record of Paul's preaching to the Ephesians

We'd know little of the Spirit's operation in men, churches, communities, and in spreading the gospel throughout the known world . . . most of these things would be speculation rather than fact.

## Addendum 2

# The Baptismal Formula and Matthew 28:19

How can we reconcile the baptismal accounts in the Book of Acts, which uniformly describe baptism in the name of Jesus, with Matthew 28:19, which says to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

The key to understanding Matthew 28:19 and harmonizing it with Acts is to note that the word *name* is singular, indicating one name. It speaks of one name that reveals the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Since all accounts of baptism in the Bible use the singular name of Lord Jesus, or Jesus Christ, it is apparent that the name of Jesus is the singular name described by Matthew 28:19. Moreover, in Jesus dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). Since He is the one God incarnate, He is the revelation of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Since He is human, He is the Son of God. Thus Jesus is the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

In the second century A.D. there was some movement away from baptism in the name of Jesus Christ to a threefold formula. This apparently stemmed from discordant views of the deity of Christ. Later, in the fourth century, a serious controversy over the Godhead threatened the

unity of the Roman Empire. Even at that time some people still believed the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh. As to His deity He was the one God; as to His humanity He was the Son of God, the temple of the living God.

This truth is demonstrated by John 2:18-22: "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

Malachi had prophesied about the coming of God in flesh: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in" (Malachi 3:1).

The Jewish people understood the claim of Christ to be the one God incarnate when He spoke the words of John 10: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered

him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:27-33).

God had come to the temple of His flesh as the Son of God, Jesus Christ. According to John 10:38 and 14:8-11, God the Father took up residence in the Son (humanity) to accomplish all of His mighty works in and through Him.

To the Early Church there was no division in the Godhead. They believed John 1:1, 14: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word [God] was made flesh." They agreed with Philippians 2:7: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

The Early Church knew nothing of three persons in the Godhead or of a trinity. This terminology and doctrine would all be developed by men at a later time, in the third and fourth centuries. It did not become official church doctrine until over two hundred years after the completion of the New Testament.

The trinitarian theory of God was officially established at two church councils, the first in A.D. 325 in Nicea as a result of a serious conflict in Christendom that threatened the unity of the empire. The Roman emperor Constantine, fearful of a disastrous split both in the empire and church, convened the council. The trinitarian theory was not finalized however, until the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. Baptism in the name of the trinity became a necessity, with the threat of expulsion from the church and even death if one was baptized any other way.

One thing every reader of the Book of Acts will discover is that it records no trinitarian baptisms. Nor do any other passages of Scripture.

Several commentators believe that the phrase "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" was not a part of the original text written by Matthew and spoken by Jesus but was interpolated at a later date. Following are some representative statements of this view.

*The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, I, 275: "It is often affirmed that the words *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* are not the *ipsissima verba* [exact words] of Jesus, but . . . a later liturgical addition."

Black's *Bible Dictionary:* "The Trinitarian formula (Matthew 28:19) was a late addition by some reverent Christian mind."

*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics:* "The obvious explanation of the silence of the New Testament on the triune name, and the use of another formula in Acts and Paul, is that this other formula was the earlier, and the triune formula is a later addition."

E. J. Fortman, *The Triune God*, page 15: "Whether these are the very words of Jesus or derive from an early baptismal formula based on the general teaching of Jesus is open to discussion."

Edmund Schlink, *The Doctrine of Baptism*, page 28: "The baptismal command in its Matthew 28:19 form cannot be the historical origin of Christian baptism. At the very least, it must be assumed that the text has been transmitted in a form expanded by the church."

Henry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church*

*Fathers*, page 277: "Critical scholarship, on the whole, rejects the traditional attribution of the tripartite baptismal formula to Jesus and regards it as a later origin."

Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christianity*, page 295: "The testimony for the wide distribution of the simple baptismal formula down into the second century is so overwhelming that even in Matthew 28:19, the trinitarian formula was later inserted."

Some scholars believe that the original text of Matthew 28:19 read, "In my name." They cite Eusebius, the influential, fourth-century bishop of Caesarea. As the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* notes, before the Council of Nicea he quoted Matthew 28:19 many times as saying "in my name." Dr. Peake expressed a common conclusion in *Bible Commentary*, page 723: "The command to baptize into the threefold name is a late doctrinal expansion. Instead of the words 'baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' we should probably read simply—'into my name.'"

The internal evidence of the New Testament indicates that baptism was never, under any circumstances, administered using the phrase "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Oneness Pentecostals use the existing text of Matthew 28:19 as the original words of Jesus, although some have pointed out the questions regarding its authenticity. They do not interpret it as a baptismal formula or a trinitarian statement, however, but see it as a description of the Jesus Name formula used in Acts and alluded to in the Epistles. They do not use it as a formula simply because it is not used in the Scriptures in that manner.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Ghost" occurs only once in the Bible. Those who interpret this phrase contrary to the evidence of the Book of Acts should heed Deuteronomy 19:15: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." (See also II Corinthians 13:1.) The interpretation that Matthew 28:19 is a quotation of the baptismal formula appears to be wrong, since no other scriptural passage supports such a view.

In interpreting Matthew 28:18-20 it is important to consider Christ's use of the singular pronouns *me* and *I* three times in verses 18 and 20, along with the singular word *name* in verse 19. The context thus indicates that He spoke of one name, not three, and specifically referred to His own name. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto *me* in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in *the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, *I* am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20, emphasis added).

If Jesus were trying to emphasize a threefold formula, why did He not say, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever *we* have commanded you: and, lo, *we* are with you alway, even unto the end of the world"?

A study of church history supports the view that the original baptismal formula was Jesus Name. Here are some references on this point compiled by Word Aflame Press in its tract *The Baptismal Formula in Scripture and History.*

*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (1951), II, 384, 389: "The formula used was 'In the name of the Lord

Jesus Christ' or some synonymous phrase; there is no evidence for the use of the triune name. . . . The earliest form, represented in the Acts, was simple immersion . . . in water, the use of the name of the Lord, and the laying on of hands. To these were added, at various times and places which cannot be safely identified, (a) the triune name (Justin). . . ."

*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (1962), I, 351: "The evidence . . . suggests that baptism in early Christianity was administered, not in the threefold name, but 'in the name of Jesus Christ' or 'in the name of the Lord Jesus.'"

Otto Heick, *A History of Christian Thought* (1965), I, 87: "At first baptism was administered in the name of Jesus, but gradually in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible* (1898), I, 241: "[One could conclude that] the original form of words was 'into the name of Jesus Christ' or 'the Lord Jesus.' Baptism into the name of the Trinity was a later development."

Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (1947), page *58:* "The trinitarian baptismal formula . . . was displacing the older baptism in the name of Christ."

*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1957), I, 435: "The New Testament knows only baptism in the name of Jesus. . . , which still occurs even in the second and third centuries."

Canney's *Encyclopedia of Religions (1970)*, Page 53: "Persons were baptized at first 'in the name of Jesus Christ' . . . or 'in the name of the Lord Jesus. . . .' Afterwards, with the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, they were baptized 'in the name of the Father and

of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'"

*Encyclopaedia Biblica* (1899), 1473: "It is natural to conclude that baptism was administered in the earliest times 'in the name of Jesus Christ,' or in that 'of the Lord Jesus.' This view is confirmed by the fact that the earliest forms of the baptismal confession appear to have been single—not triple, as was the later creed."

*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (1910), II, 365: "the trinitarian formula and trine immersion were not uniformly used from the beginning. . . . The name of the Lord [was] the normal formula of the New Testament."

In his commentary, Adam Clarke tried to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between Matthew 28:19 and Acts: "The Apostles baptized the Jews into the name of Jesus the Son, and the Gentiles, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (volume 5, page 205). The fallacy of this explanation is that there is no record in the Bible of anyone being baptized in this manner, neither Jews nor Gentiles! There is, however, proof that Samaritans (who were not Jews) were baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 8:16) and that Gentiles were baptized into the name of Jesus (not Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) (Acts 10:48; 19:5; I Corinthians 1:13). Adam Clarke's comments are a faulty explanation of the Bible record!

The weight of both scriptural and historical evidence is on the side of baptism being performed in the name of Jesus Christ, the name of the One who was crucified for us.

Some say that the formula makes no difference. If this be true, why should we not use the original formula? Why was it changed? History reveals that a new and different philosophy began to capture men's minds after the decease of the apostles and the early church fathers, and

consequently they changed the formula to express their new belief.

Every sincere person needs to ask himself these two questions: (1) If baptism was changed to the triune formula (as shown here by many references), what was the formula before it was changed? What was the original practice? (2) If the trinitarian concept of God was formulated at the councils of Nicea and Constantinople in A.D. 325 and 381, what was the concept of God prior to that in the primitive church? What was the original belief? Bible-believing people should adhere to the original baptismal formula and the original concept of the Godhead.

### The Absolute Deity of Jesus

At this point it is important to investigate the biblical doctrine of God in order to understand the significance of the Jesus Name formula and the inappropriateness of the threefold formula.

The Bible clearly proclaims that Jesus is the one God incarnate. To demonstrate this point let us look at the writings of Paul. Colossians 2:2-3 speaks of "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Then Colossians 2:9-10 states of Jesus:

*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*

Jesus is not one member in a plural Godhead; rather, the Godhead (Deity) is in Jesus! All the fulness of God is in His name and person!

I Timothy 3:16 plainly states the deity of Jesus: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." In the next chapter Paul instructed Timothy, "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (I Timothy 4:10).

The identity of Jesus as the one God incarnate is also stated in II Corinthians 5:19: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

Titus 2:13-14 similarly describes Jesus as our great God and Savior: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Paul simply realized that the great God of the Old Testament, the One whom he worshiped before meeting Christ on the Damascus road, was incarnate in Jesus Christ. Jesus is therefore the true God and eternal life, even as I John 5:20 declares. Neither Paul nor John thought of Jesus as a second person in the Godhead or taught a trinity of persons in God. Those terms were foreign to both of them and also to the Bible!

When Saul of Tarsus was smitten to the ground by that great blinding light from heaven on the road to Damascus, he cried out, "Who art thou, Lord?" He was not thinking in terms of a secondary God, but he sud-

denly realized that he was in the presence of Almighty God!

It was no wonder that he was startled and astonished when he heard the answer: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:5). He suddenly realized that he had ignorantly despised and hated the God he supposedly loved and worshiped.

Paul never lost sight of that momentous event but reiterated it over and over again. The revelation of who Jesus is became the hallmark of his ministry, and he prayed that all men would someday understand it. (See Ephesians 1:15-23.)

**Conclusion**

Why are most trinitarians so adverse to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ when it is plainly taught in the Word of God? Why do they do everything else in the name of Jesus Christ but baptize? It appears that they refuse to baptize in Jesus' name because this practice infringes upon the trinitarian tradition and to a great measure repudiates it! But the biblical formula and the biblical concept of God are more important than any human tradition.

The reader may wonder why this book has considered the subject of baptism at greater length than the other factors of salvation. The reason is simply because the baptismal formula is a distinctive, separating tenet in the biblical concepts of God and salvation. For the most part, those who adhere to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ see God's plan in a much different light than those who adhere to the trinitarian concept.

**Note**

For further study of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, see David Bernard, *The New Birth* (Hazelwood, MO.: Word Aflame Press), pp. 257-77. The author discusses the subject thoroughly, citing ancient authors and describing the modern spread of this teaching.

# SALVATION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

**There is much skepticism surrounding the Bible in today's world. One of the main targets is the book of Acts. Some see its historical value, but put no reliance in it pertaining to salvation. Others completely disregard it. Still others, such as the UPCI, trust its historical value and authenticity.**

**The premise of this book is that every salvation experience recorded in Acts coincides with Peter's initial account of salvation in Acts 2:38, and if not so stated, can be assumed or is implied.**

**The heart of the book is Paul and Cornelius' (Jew and Gentile) salvation experiences. Each is recorded in three different chapters. Combined, in each case, the full experience emerges in harmony with Peter's initial declaration.**

**The conclusion; if each salvation experience recorded was given as much coverage as these two, all would harmonize with Peter's initial declaration.**

**This is a study book, used in some Bible schools and in special classes in churches. It is also one of the required reading books for ministerial students desiring license with the UPCI.**

**Fred Kinzie** and his wife, Vera, were reared in northern Indiana, spending their early years as farmers. After coming to the Lord, they were soon wholeheartedly involved in gospel works—in evangelism for almost ten years and then as pastor of a small church in Toledo, Ohio. Today, forty-eight years later a large congregation worships the Lord at the First Apostolic Church, of which he now serves as Pastor Emeritus. Both he and his wife served in official capacities in the United Pentecostal Church International: she as president of the Ladies Auxiliary Division and he as a member of the Foreign Missions Board. This book is a result of his teaching ministry locally and in various churches throughout the nation. Previously, he has written *Strength Through Struggle*, the story of their lives, and *John: The Gospel That Had to Be Written*, and *Handbook on Receiving the Holy Ghost*.

HERALD OF HOLINESS PRESS

ISBN 0-932581-40-4

9 780932 581402